CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 23 March 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Sergei Martynov (Belarus)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 847th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like, at the outset, to extend on behalf of us all a warm welcome to the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, the Honourable Matt Robson, and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Her Excellency Ambassador Carmen Moreno, who will be addressing the Conference today. Their presence among us today yet again demonstrates the abiding commitment of their Governments to our common endeavours and the importance that those Governments attach to our forum. I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Canada, Chile, the Russian Federation, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy.

Before beginning our debate, I should like to extent a cordial welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Faessler of Switzerland and Ambassador Noboru of Japan, and to assure them of our full cooperation and support in the discharge of their functions.

The rescheduling of our last meeting from 16 to 14 March meant that I was unable to attend it and to make my introductory remarks as President. Today, I should like to make up for that missed opportunity and briefly share with you my view of the state of affairs in the Conference on Disarmament. First of all, however, I should like to express my special gratitude to my immediate predecessor as President of the Conference, Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh, for his valuable advice, his tireless energy and his efforts to seek an acceptable basis for us to begin our substantive work and, indeed, my gratitude to all the previous presidents of the Conference, in this especially difficult time for it, for the creative and exhaustive endeavours to find the sort of compromise solutions needed to launch the work for which we are all here.

I should also most sincerely like to thank the personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his Deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the secretariat staff for their constant and invaluable assistance and skilful support.

For the Republic of Belarus, which, on 27 November 1996, became a fully nuclear-free State after the withdrawal of the last intercontinental ballistic missile from the territory of the country, and for Belarus as a participant in the five-party process on implementation and the negotiations on major agreements in the field of nuclear disarmament - the START I, INF and ABM treaties - it is an honour to be chairing this Conference for the first time since the admission of our country a few years ago as a fully-fledged member. We realize that, notwithstanding its rotational nature, this lofty post vests in each of its incumbents a special responsibility and requires the maximum of effort to continue developing consensus on the programme of work of the Conference.

For me, there is yet one more personal aspect to my country's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Circumstances were such that I began my own work here in Geneva in 1991 under the former membership of the Conference with the submission of the application of the Republic of Belarus for membership of the Conference on Disarmament. The

(The President)

current presidency, in the year 2000, of the Republic of Belarus of the Conference on Disarmament is the symbolic consummation of efforts launched by the representative of Belarus in this very room 10 years ago.

Every occasion has its bright and it not so bright spots. To my great regret, the current presidency of the Conference on Disarmament is no exception to this rule, as it falls in a period when, for a continuing fourth year, efforts to dislodge the Conference from its incapacitating deadlock have failed to achieve the desired results.

In his message to the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations Secretary-General invited us all to take a candid look at the lack of progress in our work. I believe that this is the very least that we must all do. A candid look is a recognition that the continuing paralysis of the work of the Conference means compromising not only the Conference on Disarmament but also its underlying idea, the idea of multilateral disarmament negotiations as one of the fundamental notions of global security.

Whether we like it or not, the outside world - the world beyond the walls of this cosy Council Chamber - is already reacting to the erosion of the role of the Conference on Disarmament. The Ottawa Convention on Landmines is the first alarm bell.

If the members of the Conference cannot muster the strength, individually and collectively, to change the situation, further alarm bells will sound. We all know at the end of the show the curtain is rung down. I am certain that in this room there is not a single delegation that would want the curtain to be rung down on the Conference on Disarmament. Accordingly, it is time to act. And I do not mean just to appear to act: I mean, to do our work.

It is possible that, in view of the prevailing circumstances, the Conference on Disarmament is not able at this time to do everything, or even to do much, but we can and must do what is within our power.

This is like bearing a flame in the wind. What we have now in our hands is not a blazing torch - no, it is more like the flickering flame of a candle. It is important that we do not let it die, that we shelter it, that we strengthen the flame so that it can burn once again like a torch.

The President of the Conference on Disarmament cannot do this on his own - the rules of procedure and the circumstances preclude it. For that reason I am counting on your support, distinguished members of the Conference.

Perhaps, in my introductory remarks, I have not been sufficiently optimistic in mood. But, if delegations help me, I will be able to correct that mood in my concluding remarks.

I would now like to move to the conduct of today's meeting and I call upon the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand, the Honourable Matt Robson.

Mr. ROBSON (New Zealand): Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou katoa. From the people of Aotearoe, New Zealand, I bring you all greetings. I cannot help but be impressed in this room as I see the mural above us donated by the people of Spain so long ago and to realize that the world failed the people of Spain at that time, and of course, we plunged into the abyss of the Second World War.

It gives me great pleasure to address the Conference, for the first time, on behalf of New Zealand. I congratulate Belarus on assuming the presidency. Your country, Mr. President, joined this Conference alongside New Zealand, or Aotearoa, in 1996. You have no easy road ahead of you. The Conference has stalled in recent years. Disarmament talks internationally, as you know, have reached a dangerous stalemate. It is now more important than ever that we work together to search for agreement which will allow this Conference to work. New Zealand wishes you well, Mr. President. You can count on full support from our country.

I was appointed Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control some months ago following the formation of the Labour/Alliance Coalition Government in Wellington. Disarmament and arms control issues are a priority for us. None of us can afford the luxury of pessimism, and my Government will do all that it can to advocate disarmament and arms control in whatever forum we find ourselves.

New Zealanders made a stand in 1987 when we became nuclear-free. Today we continue to pursue a nuclear-weapon-free world. We are a small country but we are proud of our commitment to disarmament. Last month this was demonstrated in a concrete way with our Parliament's adoption of a resolution calling for the fulfilment of the obligation affirmed in the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and I quote, "to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". This resolution was supported by parties across the political spectrum. Support for it was unanimous in our Parliament.

Successive New Zealand Governments have long pressed for nuclear disarmament. But this resolution of the New Zealand Parliament states a commitment to an objective for which my Government, in particular, will strive with vigour and determination. Our intention is to galvanize the international community to press forward, with New Zealand, in seeking the eradication of nuclear weapons. Today I want to circulate the text of this resolution and request, Mr. President, that it be tabled as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like this morning to present New Zealand's views on some issues before our Conference. Let me first, however, make a few observations about disarmament and arms control in our world today.

I shall start with the concern felt in all corners of the globe about the uncertain international security environment and its impact on the prospects for disarmament negotiations, including in this body. There is a new and difficult dynamic at work in international relations. Its causes are diverse: nuclear tests in South Asia challenging international norms of non-proliferation and no testing, disappointment in the bilateral nuclear reductions process

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between the United States and Russia that held much promise but is faltering, fears about missile proliferation and missile defence plans, tension between States who must cooperate if we are to press on with the business which will secure future generations from the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction, and the destabilizing proliferation of conventional weapons, small or otherwise. In our corner of the South Pacific, we are aware of the growth of arms among small Pacific States. Indeed, as Conference participants have seen, new obstacles to multilateral talks seem to arise, as soon as compromise appears on the horizon.

We are under no illusion that this is an international environment where progress will be easy, but for New Zealand, one thing is clear: the world must not retreat to the days when the cold-war doctrine of nuclear armament and deterrence seemed unchangeable. New Zealand was part of that, and we changed. Instead we must take the opportunities that are available to prevent a renewed nuclear arms race and to work for disarmament.

We can draw strength and learn lessons from the real achievements of the not-so-distant past. New Zealand recognizes the significance of the START process, and I urge the Russian Duma to agree in its current session to ratify and implement START II. Rapidly moving to a START III negotiation would help restore confidence that article VI in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will be fulfilled.

Side by side with this bilateral progress there are practical steps that can be taken by all the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their stockpiles and reduce the risk of their use, while this Conference itself addresses further measures to add value to the process. My own vision is that members of nuclear-weapons-free zones can work together more closely to consolidate a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere.

How pleased we were in New Zealand, in the recent conflict in East Timor, that Indonesia had taken the bold step of not being a nuclear power. That conflict, tragic as it was and in which New Zealanders participated as peace-keeping troops, was at least one that had no threat of nuclear weapons.

In all, 136 countries supported the call in the First Committee of the United Nations for a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. Obviously, a great amount of political spadework still needs to be done to promote this proposal. These are early days yet. But by banding together with other like-minded countries, we can at least show that half the planet has disarmed for good.

New Zealand has learned from our American friends, who have a saying in the Wild West that the cowboys who came to town checked in their weapons with the sheriff. They got them when they left. We shall be asking the nuclear Powers to check in their weapons at the equator. They can collect them when they leave.

We can take the opportunity to urge India and Pakistan to turn back from the path they chose in 1998. As members of the Commonwealth, it gives us great sadness that two countries such as Pakistan and India play with nuclear weapons. We want to beat them in a cricket race,

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not a nuclear race. New Zealand itself has drawn a firm line against acceptance of proliferation in any part of the world. We pay tribute to those States who possessed nuclear weapons as members of the former Soviet Union, gave them up and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear members. Equally, we salute the decisions of others in Africa and Latin America who once stood apart from this Treaty, but have decided in recent years to join the international non-proliferation norm. These States had the choice: they chose the path to national and regional security as non-nuclear-weapon States. Before I became Minister of Disarmament, an example that particularly stood out to me was South Africa. I applauded the post-apartheid Government when it made the courageous decision to decommission its nuclear weapons. The South Africans showed that it can be done, and must be done. They are an example to us all.

The CTBT - a singular achievement for this Conference of great significance for New Zealand - deserves our continued commitment. I urge all those who have yet to sign or ratify to do so, while we work together to prepare its global verification system for entry into force.

This Conference also has the opportunity to proceed with the next step in the process of nuclear disarmament - a fissile material cut-off treaty, which was mandated for action five years ago. It has the chance to agree to deal with nuclear disarmament in a broader context. And there is the prospect of considering preventive measures to keep the realm of outer space peaceful. I urge you to take these opportunities without further delay.

Since the Conference stopped work over three years ago, it has come tantalizingly close on occasions to agreeing to restart, but not close enough. It is difficult for many of us to comprehend that we cannot agree on mechanisms and mandates for addressing these international concerns. We do try to appreciate the views of those who are advocating negotiating mandates and those who are having difficulties accepting them. But, in a body governed by consensus, it does not make sense that we refuse to take the first step to engage, especially in the light of repeated calls for action made by the wider international community in the United Nations General Assembly and elsewhere.

Notwithstanding the difficult international backdrop against which you work, there is evidence that the Conference's procedures are harming prospects for a start to work. For one thing, New Zealand questions whether the Conference on Disarmament should address international security and arms control issues on a narrow year-by-year schedule where there is no guarantee that work begun in one year will continue in the next. The real world does not operate in that way. Neither are other international negotiations the prerogative of only one third of the international community. In short, our immediate focus must be to start substantive work, but New Zealand will also support the Conference taking up the challenge of its own reformation and restoration in the world of multilateral negotiations.

The Conference is in a defining phase. Blame cannot rest at its door alone. But all of its members and observer delegations cannot escape responsibility for the inertia, and the risks that

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its continuing paralysis entails. For New Zealand there is no substitute for multilateralism. Give up on that and we could find ourselves bidding farewell to the chances for a more secure international environment.

I mentioned earlier the opportunities that are present for an end to the stalemate on the international disarmament and arms control agenda. We who are members of the NPT have the chance next month to reaffirm and build upon the deal struck in 1995 when the NPT was made permanent in a package of decisions which strengthened accountability for the implementation of its central promise of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. My Government is committed to the New Agenda Coalition as offering a way forward. We shall be working at next month's Review Conference with our coalition partners, co-sponsors and supporters to deliver the call it makes for a new political undertaking to accelerate the process of negotiations on eliminating nuclear weapons. In 2000, we must, I believe, signal clearly that there is a new political determination to achieve the disarmament bargain of this Treaty, to quash once and for all the falsehood that indefinite extension sanctioned the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons.

I consider that the call we make in the New Agenda for this new undertaking is the way forward. Once again, I reiterate, that for New Zealand pessimism and stalemate is not our path. It is very much my hope that this Conference - our Conference - and the meeting of NPT members next month conclude likewise.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control of New Zealand for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I would now like to call on Her Excellency Ambassador Carmen Moreno, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Ms. MORENO (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Before starting my statement, I would like to thank you for the kind words that you addressed to me personally and I would also like to reiterate the congratulations of my delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am certain that your diplomatic skill will be a key element for the success of its work and I hope that you will accomplish the progress indispensable for our work in the Conference.

Through you, Sir, I also wish to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Bangladesh, for his tireless efforts and valuable proposals, with a view to identifying a programme of work that would be satisfactory to all. Likewise, I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky and his team for their wise counsel.

Yet again I am addressing this Conference on Disarmament to demonstrate, through my presence, the importance that Mexico attaches to nuclear disarmament and to the efforts of the sole multilateral negotiating forum that the international community has established in this field.

The lack of consensus on a global agenda for disarmament in the post-cold war period is deplorable and poses an additional threat to international peace and security. Therefore we must

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reverse this situation as soon as possible. To start the twenty-first century with a new failure of this Conference would be unacceptable and dangerous. Soon we will reach the end of the first part of this year's session without having reached agreement on how to deal with the substantive issues.

I urge you to begin a process of serious consideration, in the awareness of your own responsibility, to ensure that urgent agreements can be reached when the Conference begins the second part of its work this year. These include adjusting our rules of procedure so that the establishment of subsidiary bodies does not become a matter of substance and detract from the negotiating work with which we have been entrusted.

I believe that we should not get side-tracked in procedural discussions, when our duty is to agree on substantive matters relating to disarmament. Our peoples have a right to international peace and security. Let us perform our duty and reach the agreements necessary for the achievement of that peace and security.

At a time of intense and rapid globalization it is inconceivable to try to build islands that will suit each one of us. If we accept that there is no issue more universal or global than international peace and security, we must recognize our general and shared responsibility. We all have the right to build the future. We all have the obligation to preserve peace. We must all shoulder our responsibility and bring about nuclear disarmament. It is regrettable that nuclear disarmament today appears more a remote goal than in 1978, when we set out objectives and priorities in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Even if we acknowledge that some small progress has been made, the "effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament", which were urgently called for by the Assembly, appear to remain beyond our reach.

Mexico has been a fervent advocate of nuclear disarmament. The Tlatelolco Treaty freed Latin America and the Caribbean from the temptation of nuclear weapons and has served as an example for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free areas throughout the world.

Here I would like to refer to the statement we have just heard from the Minister of New Zealand. I do not think that the line ends at Ecuador. We are quite a bit further to the north and, therefore, we do not believe it is sufficient merely to acknowledge that the existence of nuclear weapons in the world is a real and actual danger; instead, we should step up our activities since this very existence could bring our civilization to an end. Nor can we forget the constant risk that nuclear weapons could be used, whether by accident or by mistake.

Apart from this danger, the availability of technology and materials related to the production of those weapons renders imperative the need for an unequivocal commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Accordingly, we must adopt new approaches to reach this objective. If nuclear disarmament is to become a reality in this new millennium, now that we

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have seen the end of bipolar confrontation, we must put a stop to these doctrines of nuclear deterrence. Not only are these doctrines obsolete, they impede the establishment of a non-discriminatory and universal nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Let us recall that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was conceived as an instrument that should be based on an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations. Non-proliferation is not an end in itself, but a step in the right direction, towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons as a prior step, as a prelude to nuclear disarmament. For that reason, the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons is a grave threat the consequences and dangers of which we dare not even contemplate.

Equally preoccupying are the dangers of vertical and qualitative proliferation. The abundance of fissile material and certain new technological discoveries also heighten the risks of nuclear proliferation in all its aspects.

The non-nuclear-weapon States find disheartening the continuing validity of doctrines of nuclear deterrence, as well as the fact that the security systems of the nuclear-weapon States still rest primarily on these weapons, even though the cold war has ended, the NPT has been indefinitely extended and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has been concluded. We believe that nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility in implementing the NPT and that the non-proliferation regime should therefore be strengthened through nuclear disarmament measures.

In a few weeks, the Non-Proliferation Treaty will hold its sixth review conference. In all, 187 States parties will meet, for the first time since the indefinite extension was agreed upon, with the intention of reviewing, as objectively as possible, compliance with its provisions. The review will take place in the context of a series of differences and lack of consensus in the field of disarmament, which casts a shadow over the outcome of the meeting and the general situation of the non-proliferation regime and nuclear disarmament.

The environment surrounding the meeting is clouded by the failure of three out of the five official nuclear weapon States to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the absence of certain States with nuclear capacity, which is likely to hamper its entry into force. The beginning of negotiations on a treaty to prohibit fissile material for military purposes is also facing an impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and profound differences with regard to its scope.

Some of these elements are bound to affect the prospects for compliance with the provisions of the Treaty, such as the nuclear tests held in South-East Asia 1998; the insistence on doctrines of nuclear deterrence; the continuous upgrading of nuclear arsenals; and the faltering détente among nuclear States.

We are also concerned about the impact that might result from the plans to deploy an anti-missile defence system, which could hamper the strategic arms reduction process and trigger a new arms race.

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Faced with this rather discouraging prospect, we should mobilize and identify areas of common understanding. The success of this review conference, the first after the indefinite extension of the Treaty is crucial for the survival of the Treaty. We believe that support must be given to a renewed review process, reaffirming agreed principles and objectives and achieving agreements and specific commitments in nuclear disarmament.

In the twenty-first century, in the age of globalization, we must banish the threat of nuclear war and not shirk our shared responsibility in the field of nuclear disarmament. Instead we must seek the mechanisms to make it a reality. Good faith, mutual trust and the objective of peace and the common good must be the mainstay of our participation at that meeting.

Mexico is one of the group of countries that launched two years ago the initiative on a new agenda for nuclear disarmament, which proposes a modest programme for action to progress towards the most important objective set by the international community: the total and permanent elimination of nuclear weapons. This new agenda seeks progress in common undertakings; it seeks to change attitudes and approaches; it seeks to build a bridge towards the future, a bridge that will enable us to put cold war thinking behind us and to advance in the century of technology on the road to peace; it seeks to open up spaces, to facilitate agreements; it seeks to contribute to the common task of achieving disarmament. In short, it seeks to fulfil our obligation as responsible members of the international community.

The important contribution of the Group of 21 to efforts to identify a programme of work in this Conference, including the idea of establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, should not be discounted. We regret that the flexibility of our group did not elicit a comparable response from other groups. We will continue to insist on this, however, as it is our responsibility to do so. We are convinced that it is imperative to approach the issue of nuclear disarmament as a matter of urgency and that this is the right forum for that.

Allow me, Sir, to turn to another topic requiring our urgent attention: the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Technological developments have made an arms race in outer space possible. Mexico believes that space must be reserved exclusively for peaceful uses that benefit humankind and that an arms race must be prevented.

We are convinced that today, more than ever before, the 1967 Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, is still valid. This instrument establishes that outer space is not subject to national appropriation. As States parties to the Treaty, we have undertaken not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapon of mass destruction, not to install such weapons on celestial bodies and not to station such weapons in outer space in any other manner. The provisions of the existing legal instruments in this area are limited in scope, however, and may prove insufficient to prevent the deployment of other types of weapons in out space.

Since the subject of the prevention of an arms race in outer space was taken up in the Conference on Disarmament in 1985, we have exchanged views on a range of relevant

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definitions, principles, existing treaties and confidence-building measures and we have gathered a wealth of experience in this area. Mexico considers that the time has come to move forward in banning the establishment of military bases, facilities or fortification for military uses, and also with regard to the testing and deployment of any category of weapon in outer space.

Consequently, I propose that the Conference establish, as a matter of the highest priority, an ad hoc committee to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument on the prohibition of the testing, deployment and use of weapons and weapons systems and/or their components in outer space that would help prevent an arms race in space. The twenty-first century must consolidate the commitment to peace and use all technologies to benefit humankind and not to destroy it.

The negotiations to develop a verification protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on Their Destruction have reached a critical phase. Mexico has insisted that the ad hoc group entrusted with negotiating the protocol should fully discharge its mandate, including the establishment of international cooperation mechanisms. We hope that a cooperation committee is established within the future organization for the prohibition of biological weapons, and that this committee will be responsible for promoting, coordinating and reviewing the cooperation activities of the States parties and promoting the effective and complete implementation of the Convention's provisions. The protocol should also cover the regulation of transfers of technology for peaceful purposes and include appropriate provisions for cooperation.

Mexico has participated in various international initiatives on the problem of conventional weapons, particularly with regard to their link to violence and insecurity. Our Governments and civil society have recognized the need for urgent action to prevent threats to international peace and security resulting from the excessive availability and uncontrolled use of small arms and light weapons.

At the regional level, Mexico sponsored the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials, which entered into force on 1 July 1998 and whose Advisory Committee was established just a few days ago. Its objective is to eliminate the illicit traffic in these weapons that, unfortunately, has developed in our region in connection with drug trafficking and organized crime. We have also adopted bilateral and multilateral cooperation measures to this end.

In the United Nations we are promoting the adoption, this year, of a protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, within the Ad Hoc Committee in Vienna entrusted with the elaboration of a convention against transnational organized crime.

We are convinced that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons affects all countries one way or another and that their availability must be curtailed if violence is to be avoided. Accordingly, Mexico has also taken an active part in the Panel of Governmental

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Experts of the United Nations and in the work of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All their Aspects, which met recently in New York. We hope that this Conference will adopt a programme of action that envisages the implementation of a series of national, regional and international cooperation and coordination measures and mechanisms to prevent and combat the illicit trafficking in and production of small arms and light weapons, as well as to ensure that weapons originating from illicit traffic, when they become illicit weapons, are detected, confiscated and destroyed.

In the United Nations we have also participated in the creation of the Register of Conventional Arms and we regularly provide information. We are also part of the group of experts looking into a possible expansion of the Register to include new categories of weapons and to widen its scope so that it covers the issue of transparency vis-à-vis weapons of mass destruction.

At the regional level and on a Mexican initiative, a working group was established, within the Rio Group, on the limitation of conventional weapons. This group recently held its third meeting in Mexico and it is endeavouring to formulate a proposal for the possible adoption of measures to strengthen confidence and transparency relating to the acquisition, transfer, production and possession of offensive conventional weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. This will require, following the model of the Tlatelolco Treaty, the support of the countries which supply Latin America with offensive conventional weapons in respecting the self-control measures, which may be established.

Allow me, Sir, to stress, once again, how vital it is that the Conference on Disarmament overcome its deadlock. We cannot keep revisiting the same procedural discussions year in year out, while we witness how in other forums progress is made on subjects that we should be dealing with here. Our inability to reach agreements on our priorities has left us paralysed. We have taken up precious time re-establishing agreements that we had already achieved. The Conference should not lose its relevance. It must mend its procedures and adopt a new pragmatic and realistic approach so that progress can be made in specific nuclear disarmament measures.

We could begin by adopting the suggestion of the delegation of Chile to the effect that, once the establishment of a subsidiary body has been decided, that body should continue its work until it has fulfilled its mandate without the need to re-establish it every year. We should not forget that, with the failure of the Conference, we are helping to endanger international peace and security.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Mexico for her important statement and for her kind words addressed to the President.

I now call on the distinguished representative of Canada, Ambassador Westdal.

Mr. WESTDAL (Canada): I hasten to use this, my first formal opportunity, to congratulate you on your office and your conduct and to assure you of Canada's support, cooperation - and empathy - as you wrestle with the knotted immobility of our Conference.

I take the floor having just returned from a week in Canada, where I appeared before our Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs to discuss Canada's nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament policy. I also visited eight cities on a public-speaking and media tour to depict and debate with Canadians our Government's policy and action to protect our security against the threats of nuclear arsenals and to fulfil our treaty and ethical obligations to help control, reduce, prohibit and eliminate them. We believe the fresh air and frank scrutiny of public consultations can animate and enrich our foreign policy.

I told the Canadians I reached what Minister Axworthy and our Department were doing, above all, to keep the promises of the NPT. I discussed our objectives for the coming Review Conference: universality, agreed principles and objectives, stronger mechanisms for review, and the generation of global conviction and political will through an enhanced public and political profile for the Treaty and for the Review Conference.

Our active hope is that, whatever its formal outcome, the Conference will send a signal of concern and commitment powerful enough to escape the confines of the United Nations and reach and sway capitals and people beyond. Canada wants the Review Conference to succeed by generating the kind of political energy, will and leadership required in capitals - and, through them, in multilateral organs like ours - to restore momentum to faltering nuclear arms control and to correct the course of currently deteriorating disarmament trends.

There was much emphasis in public discussion on action to implement Canadian policy to devalue the political currency of nuclear weapons, whether in NATO, as in the review now under way with our active support, or in South Asia where we resist according status and rewarding proliferation with prestige.

Reviewing the broad background to the NPT Review, we talked about good news - and bad. We found hope in prospects for major power amity, in START weapon dismantlement and in strengthened safeguards, for example, but we found much to undermine that hope for a safer world in recent proliferation, in the re-rationalization of nuclear arsenals, in the derailment of the CTBT, in START's stop, in stubborn faith in nuclear deterrence and in pride and presumed status in the possession of nuclear weapons (astonishing pride, where shame should be, for those arsenals are after all the means of massive indiscriminate killing).

Everywhere I went, people wanted to talk about nuclear deterrence and the grave risks apparent in the incoherent threat at its heart to use unusable weapons, in its assumption of rationality and in its brittle inadaptability to dynamic global security circumstances.

Among Canadian's concerns about the prospective future course of nuclear-weapon attitudes, policies and arsenals was naturally the paralysis of our Conference. I hastened to explain to my listeners that, in the absence of political will, leadership and instructions, we were

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no more able to negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements than professional teams were able to play ball in the absence of a functioning league and an agreed schedule of games. People replied that they knew we could not do everything, but asked why that had to mean we could not do anything. They knew we could not solve every problem, but wondered why that had to mean we could not solve any - why we could not even bring ourselves to talk about any.

The facts speak for themselves. For four years, we have negotiated nothing. For the second year in a row, we have failed to agree to a work programme. Since late last century, we have been confined to sterile debate about the implementation of two specific points of a draft programme of work. Like it or not, this record calls our very purpose into question in public opinion and in considered assessments of our work, our credibility, our potential and our prospects.

I explained our deadlock with reference to rigid attitudes (in defining consensus or in insisting on all or nothing, as examples) and, more specifically, with reference to layered knots, some obscuring others, in conflicting approaches to three key issues - nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and fissile material control. Some delegations see blocking progress in one or more of these fields as more important than achieving progress in any of the others. Some delegations refuse to abandon goals much opposed by one or more other delegations, even at the cost of blocking all movement. Some delegations clearly accord regional solidarity higher effective priority than progress in any of these fields. And some delegations see the Conference on Disarmament as a useful forum for scoring diplomatic points in disarmament issues actually managed elsewhere, injury to our prospects here notwithstanding.

In a consensus-based organization, such a tangle of attitudes and approaches, combined with mutual miscalculations of priorities and depths of commitment, is a sure recipe for prolonged stalemate. Faith is lost in win-win solutions - indeed, the sum of the game is thought less than zero. Given these constraints, the key question faced by those who want us to get back to work is how our various perceptions and goals can be realigned to permit consensus on a return to substance.

It is not, after all, as though there were any shortage of problems for us to tackle. Nor is it as though there were not much at stake - including the credibility and future of this unique, arguably irreplaceable, multilateral arms control and negotiating body, so long as it so patently fails to earn its keep.

One key question is how to resolve apparently irreconcilable differences without "dumbing down" proposals so far that some committed members find them unacceptable. One unacceptable degradation for us, for example, would be the loss of an FMCT Ad Hoc Committee with full negotiating powers. A fissile material cut-off treaty has been a Canadian priority for decades. Moreover, it was one of the key promises in the Principles and Objectives of the NPT's indefinite extension five years ago.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

Other Canadian priorities have long been plain. Delegations will recall, for example, that we tabled two proposals last year for Conference on Disarmament action on nuclear disarmament and on PAROS. We recognize that these proposals do not now represent a basis for possible consensus. We have not, however, conditioned our acceptance of any and all work in the Conference on Disarmament upon everyone else's acceptance of our terms and our terms only. That is why we have been prepared to support the Dembri package - and to consider even the Belgian proposal on nuclear disarmament (though not if it were linked to any FMCT retrogression).

We believe that, in the continuing absence of consensus on our programme of work as a whole, we should nonetheless be able to act in specific fields, whether top priority or not, where there is consensus for progress. We note that the insistence by some delegations on a so-called "comprehensive and balanced programme of work" has no basis whatever in the Conference's rules of procedure. We are prepared to proceed appropriately on each item, separately or in combination, with no linkages and no rigid packaging. We think this approach would permit modest progress and generate useful confidence and momentum. It would also reduce emerging speculation and potential pressure to abandon this shop and move elements of its work elsewhere.

We are realists. We know that some delegations are not now ready to resume substantive work in specific fields. We do not accept, though, that this means nothing can be done in any field until every delegation is ready. We think the approach which our distinguished colleague, Ambassador Illanes of Chile, suggested last year is worth further exploration. It would have our President simply organize unofficial consultations (without records or official documentation) open to all delegations and observers in the Conference on Disarmament on each item of the agenda. We think that could help us find bases for official substantive discussion and in due course for specific negotiations.

We also serve those who stand and wait. We serve while we wait for the dangers to be recognized in indefinitely extended faith in nuclear deterrence, in NPT fidelity gaps, in faltering nuclear arms control and in proliferation. We serve while we wait for that recognition to sink in, for it to stir public opinion and generate political will and energy. And we serve while we wait for that political change to change our instructions, to unchain our potential, to get us back to fruitful work.

What counts here now is the quality of our service. Professional diplomats all, with mandates as grave as can be, we serve truly, while we wait, only if we do our own utmost to get those grave dangers we confront recognized. We serve truly, while we wait, only if we ourselves spare no effort to bring that recognition home to our Governments and our citizens and let it register, let it engender political will and leadership. We serve truly, while we wait, only if, through the intergovernmental interaction that we mediate here, we make this Conference itself a seedbed of political energy and commitment. We serve truly, while we wait, only if we ourselves - uniquely placed to see, to speak and to be heard - move heaven and earth to get this body back to good work.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

If our lot here is to negotiate, let us bring our professional best to bear, in the fine tradition of our predecessors. If our lot is talk, then let us do that well too, with heads open to truth and hearts to common ground. And if our lot is the canaries' in the mine or the lemmings' at the cliff's edge, then let us voice our warning loud and force a change in course.

These are the attitudes that guide Canada's delegation through these frustrating days. This is the spirit we will take to the NPT Review Conference and put to work for the political success of that meeting. And this is the determination with which we will return here this summer to resume these significant endeavours.

If collectively we go on failing, if we lose the chance now still before us for radical reductions in nuclear weapons and decisive disarmament progress, if we give our children and theirs no real hope of escape from grave nuclear danger, if we thus end up with roles in such a massive betrayal of hope, let it never fairly be said that it was for any lack of our trying, here, now.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the President. Distinguished delegates, as you know, Ambassador Illanes of Chile will soon be leaving Geneva, after representing his country in this Conference for nearly three years. During that time he demonstrated a true determination to achieve a convergence of views on the Conference's programme of work. His firmness of purpose and his hard work was recognized with his appointment in 1998 as Special Coordinator for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and, in this capacity, he has demonstrated his well-known diplomatic skills. I am certain that you all, that the entire Conference will want to join me in wishing him and his family the very best for the future and, with those words, I give you the floor, Ambassador Illanes.

Mr. ILLANES (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I thank you sincerely for your very warm and kind words regarding me and the work that I have done here in the Conference. In turn, I too would like to congratulate you and offer you my best wishes for a successful presidency and my hope that, during your term of office, you really succeed in relaunching the work of this Conference, which is so important. I would also like to thank those who have preceded you this year as President and who also made great efforts to secure agreement on a programme of work for the Conference. Together with them, you form part of a chain of Presidents who, for more than three years, have tried to break the deadlock in our work, sadly, to no avail. Now the time has come for me to leave Geneva and I must concede, with regret, that a body of such importance for world peace is still faced by a serious stalemate.

Over the past three years I have had the privilege of working alongside representatives, such as yourselves, with the highest diplomatic and intellectual skills. I have been able not only to appreciate those skills but also the sincere and repeated efforts you have made on behalf of the noble objectives of disarmament. At the same time, we have always enjoyed the most valuable support of the Secretary-General, Mr. Petrovsky, and the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr.Bensmail, and their colleagues in the secretariat. I have also shared your frustrations at seeing our work paralysed by factors beyond our control.

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

It is obvious that this paralysis is not the exclusive preserve of the Conference on Disarmament. The preparatory process of the NPT Review Conference has clearly demonstrated this and it is not surprising that, on the eve of that conference, the prospects of its success are meagre.

I do not intend to revisit the numerous proposals that have come before the Conference over the past three years in the hope of having a programme of work adopted. Notwithstanding the diplomatic skills deployed in the preparation of these proposals, they have not succeeded in overcoming the main obstacle - the controversy that has been going on for years between countries which want to discuss nuclear disarmament with the aim of arriving at a convention that prohibits nuclear weapons and certain others, mainly nuclear Powers, which are opposed to this, maintaining that this matter, even though it is formally part of the Conference's agenda, can only be dealt with in direct negotiations among the nuclear Powers themselves. In addition to this, another serious difficulty has emerged with the differences of view on the important issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This situation has led some delegations to seek reforms to the Conference's procedures, as a means of helping it start its substantive work.

Of course, we cannot be so naive as to believe that the mere better handling of the work process of the Conference on Disarmament, which could be achieved through certain reforms designed to improve or rationalize its procedures, would in itself produce meaningful progress in the results of our work. It is clear that there is a correlation between the productivity of this body and the conditions of harmony or tension and mistrust that prevail among the great Powers or even among the other actors in the international arena. Nevertheless, many delegations believe it possible that, even under the present unpromising circumstances, the improvement and modernization of procedures and methods of work of the Conference could boost the chances of success of our efforts to end the deadlock and to resume work.

With these considerations in mind, the Chilean delegation has proposed to the Conference the possibility and the advantage of agreeing upon certain functional arrangements of a limited scope which, without altering the current rules of procedure, would nevertheless enable the Conference to carry out meaningful work in preparing the ground and facilitating subsequent negotiations on various items of its agenda.

We might recall that, towards the end of the Conference's 1997 session, the Chilean delegation presented various ideas based on this reasoning. Later, in March 1998, as you were kind enough to recall, I was appointed Special Coordinator for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference and, in September of that year, I reported to the Conference on the outcome of the consultations carried out in fulfilment of that mandate. In those consultations several possibilities were explored, including one involving the establishment of certain more or less permanent committees or working groups, for each agenda item, on the understanding that such a step would in no way imply a commitment to initiate any specific negotiations at a later stage. The purpose of those groups was "to clarify national positions while seeking to promote convergences".

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

These consultations with the Conference on Disarmament delegations and observers were very interesting and a large number of comments were formulated. The idea itself was widely supported but it also raised doubts among several delegations and even a few negative reactions. That was also the case with other ideas and proposals that were discussed during those consultations. A general argument against those ideas was the reluctance of many delegations to do anything which would require a reform of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

I informed the Conference about the general agreement among delegations to continue examining the question of the more effective functioning of the Conference in the 1999 session and the general support for presidential "troika" practice, and also about the unanimous recognition of the merit of the informal consultations carried out by the President in order to facilitate progress in the work of the Conference.

In the light of the above, in August 1999 the Chilean delegation presented to the Conference an informal proposal suggesting that it should be the President of the Conference who would organize consultations on each item of the agenda and that these consultations would be informal and confidential discussions. The President himself could lead these discussions, or delegate this task to one or more "friends of the Chair". The consultations would have no records or any kind of official documentation and would be open to all delegations and observers of the Conference on Disarmament.

It could of course be argued that the President already has weekly informal consultations with the coordinators of the regional groups. This is true, but these deal with the programme of work, not with the substance of the agenda items and they are restricted to the coordinators of the groups. In our proposal the President would be exercising his power to convene informal consultations on a more regular and broad basis.

In our proposal, all countries could participate in the presidential consultations, enriching them with their ideas. At the same time, these consultations would be more focused than the current ones, as they would consider each agenda item. These consultations could be organized in a very flexible manner. For instance, preference could be given to items that may seem, at a given moment, to be more interesting or promising than others. Perhaps one meeting a week could serve the purpose of keeping alive an informal exchange of views on the substance of the broad range of items on the Conference's agenda. This, we hope, could contribute to a gradual consensus building on the various aspects of disarmament.

It is clear to everyone that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body and that we must not transform it into a forum for endless debates or for "talks about talks". The discussions that we are suggesting would not have this undesirable nature, however, since they would take place in a strictly informal and confidential framework, enabling us to move forward in studying and reflecting upon the complex substantive aspects and options of each agenda item.

(Mr. Illanes, Chile)

The delegation of Chile has put this idea before the Conference in the hope of facilitating its functioning and we do not think that it would require any change in the rules of procedure: what it needs is political will. We do sincerely believe that this could, to a certain extent, help us reach the important objective of this irreplaceable forum. It is precisely at difficult times such as the present that the need arises to reformulate past practices by adapting them to the present reality.

Forgive me for having insisted yet again on these ideas, on which there was no full consensus in the past. I have done so in the hope that yet another year of frustration and inaction of the Conference, added to the previous years, to which the three speakers before me have referred so eloquently, might persuade those delegations which previously had doubts to reconsider the possibility of offering the Conference on Disarmament the opportunity to do useful and substantive work. With its entirely informal nature, this approach would not in any way affect the negotiating positions of the various countries, but, instead, would enable them to exchange ideas, explore alternatives and move forward towards the objectives of disarmament. I would like to conclude by expressing my fervent wish that the Conference may soon get under way again.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President, and I thank him yet again for his contribution to ideas about how to develop our working methods and wish him every success for the future. I now give the floor to the representatives of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Sidorov.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor and to use this opportunity to congratulate you on your assumption of this important post, to wish you every success and to assure you of my delegation's readiness for constructive cooperation.

The work on the Conference on Disarmament in the year 2000 is taking place against the background of a tricky international situation. The negative factors are well known. They were bound also to influence the effective functioning of our forum, which is so sensitive to what is happening in the world. Regrettably, it has to be noted that the Conference has not begun its substantive work by the end of the first part of this session. Nevertheless, I should like to express the hope that the participants in the Conference will be able to agree on its programme of work. All premises are in place to do so.

The Russian delegation, as is well known, has always been committed to constructive cooperation. It has more than once come up with compromise approaches with a view to finding mutually acceptable solutions to topical international disarmament issues. We are ready to continue such cooperation and to work for results in the Conference on Disarmament.

The issues of safeguarding international security, strengthening the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and ensuring further progress in the area of multilateral disarmament have always been the focus of Russia's

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

foreign policy. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and as one of its depositories, the Russian Federation considers the NPT to be a time-tested instrument, which has become one of the main pillars of the system of international security. It is precisely the NPT which is primarily responsible for containing the spread of nuclear weapons while ensuring the development of international cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this connection, we attach high importance to the forthcoming NPT Review Conference. It is designed to take stock of the results of the implementation of the Treaty over the past five years and to outline the main prospects for the operation of the NPT regime.

Taking into account the obligations assumed under article VI of the Treaty, Russia is taking the successive steps towards the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament. The Russian Federation is doing so both on a unilateral basis and on a bilateral basis with the United States of America.

The treaty between the USSR and the United States on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) was a major step towards the reduction of nuclear weapons. Within the framework of this Treaty, land-based missiles of two classes with the range from 500 to 5,500 km were completely eliminated and a ban imposed on their production and testing.

The Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I), which entered into force on 5 December 1994, was a landmark achievement in reducing nuclear weapons. In the implementation of its unilateral initiatives and in fulfilment of the START I Treaty, Russia has taken a number of major steps, which have resulted in a significant reduction of its nuclear arsenal. Most important, this reduction is irreversible. By now, more than 930 launchers for ICBMs and SLBMs have been eliminated in Russia under the START I Treaty, as well as about 2,000 missiles for such launchers, 24 nuclear submarines and more than 80 heavy bombers. Overall, the strategic nuclear forces of Russia will be reduced by approximately 40 per cent under that Treaty.

The START II Treaty, signed on 3 January 1993, provides for an even more substantial reduction in the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States - down to 3,000-3,500 warheads. Multiple-re-entry-vehicle ICBMs will be eliminated in accordance with the Treaty. As a result of the implementation of the agreements reached, strategic offensive arms in Russia and the United States will be reduced overall by two thirds, as compared to 1990 levels.

Active work is being conducted now in the State Duma of the Russian Federation on ratification of the START II Treaty. The process of examination of the Treaty is rather difficult, as the Treaty touches on the very foundations of the State's military security. It has already been suspended twice, as you know, through no fault of ours.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

The agreements reached in New York in September 1997 concerning the ABM Treaty and the extension of the implementation schedule for the START II Treaty will serve as a spur to ratification. These agreements have already been submitted to the State Duma for ratification. The United States has not concluded the START II ratification process either as it has not as yet ratified the above-mentioned New York agreements.

In March 1997, the Presidents of Russia and the United States agreed on further sweeping steps in the area of arms reduction within the framework of the START III Treaty. It is envisaged that each party's nuclear capacities should be reduced to 2,000-2,500 warheads by the end of 2007. In addition, we are ready to consider the reduction of the parties' nuclear capacities, within the START III Treaty, to 1,500 warheads. In so doing, our basic assumption is that the START III Treaty will be designed to serve the purposes of the further strengthening of strategic stability, the elaboration of measures to promote the irreversibility of deep reductions in strategic arms and confidence-building.

As for tactical nuclear weapons, in keeping with the statements by the President of the USSR of 5 October 1991 and the President of the Russian Federation of 29 January 1992, Russia has been fully and consistently implementing its declared unilateral initiatives. By now, all tactical nuclear weapons have been removed from surface ships and multipurpose submarines, as well as from naval land-based aircraft, and placed in centralized storage facilities. One third of the total quantity of nuclear munitions for tactical sea-based missiles and naval aircraft have been eliminated. The destruction of nuclear warheads of tactical missiles, artillery shells and nuclear mines is nearing completion. Half the total number of nuclear warheads for anti-aircraft missiles and of nuclear air bombs have been destroyed.

All nuclear weapons located outside Russia have been brought back to its territory and their elimination has begun. In this connection, I should like to draw attention once again to the Russian proposal to the effect that all nuclear weapons should be taken back to the territories of the nuclear States to which they belong.

Being committed to the policy of strengthening the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament, the Russian Federation considers it necessary to increase the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is to be regretted, of course, that the United States has not ratified the CTBT. We hope, however, that the United States Administration has not given up and will undertake more efforts to that end. For its part, the Russian Government, has submitted the CTBT to the State Duma for ratification.

We are convinced that the next step in strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime should consist in the elaboration of a multilateral agreement on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Russia supports an early start of negotiations to this end in the Conference on Disarmament and the re-establishment of an appropriate ad hoc committee. In the context of those negotiations, we would like to emphasize that in Russia, for a number of years, there has been no production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

The Russian Federation has always supported and continues to support the just aspirations of the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT that they be provided with assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapon. The implementation of that task is, without question, a complicated matter, requiring concerted effort and the political will of all States taking part in the discussion of this issue. It is also essential to choose the right approach to establishing the priorities for this work and the venue where it is to be conducted.

For its part, Russia does not see any multilateral negotiating forum other than the Conference on Disarmament which could address this problem. For that reason we support the re-establishment in the Conference of an appropriate official committee with the same mandate as before. Nor do we object to the elaboration in the Conference on Disarmament of a global agreement on negative security assurances, provided it takes into account our fundamental reservations with regard to the cases where nuclear weapons could be used in order to repel aggression.

We should also like to reaffirm our readiness, in principle, to enlarge the range of countries that benefit from the system of security assurances which is already in place, by stepping up the process of creating nuclear-weapon-free zones, subject to the non-nuclear countries giving their commitment not to acquire, not to station and not to deploy nuclear weapons in their territories. Today the NSA regime covers 107 States. We support the continuation of this process.

In general, the Russian Federation, as before, is seriously committed to cooperation with other delegations on issues of nuclear disarmament and has repeatedly demonstrated its flexibility and readiness for compromises. At the same time, we do not consider this an appropriate juncture, for the purposes of nuclear disarmament, to start work in the Conference on a programme of nuclear disarmament within specified time-frames. In our view, it would be more productive to follow a smooth, step-by-step transition from bilateral to quinquelateral and then multilateral agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament taking into account emerging international realities.

In my recent statement in this hall, I had the opportunity to share with my colleagues the Russian approach to the problems of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Notwithstanding that statement, I feel I must once again say a few words on this subject, as we consider it extremely important.

Deep cuts in strategic offensive arms are only possible in a world when strategic stability is maintained. The 1972 ABM treaty is the central element of the entire structure of arrangements in the area of nuclear disarmament and the basis for the maintenance of strategic stability and international security. Preservation of the basic provisions of this treaty would help prevent the emergence of a whole class of space weapons, namely, ABM weapons; it would help strengthen the ban on the introduction of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. At the current time, however, there is a real threat of the existing arrangements being disrupted. The reasons for this are well known.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

In this connection, the speedy elaboration of an international legal regime prohibiting the introduction of strike weapons in outer space should become one of the principal tasks of the world community. We support the efforts of the participants of the Group of 21, our Chinese colleagues, and favour, like them, the early re-establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate.

Here I should like once more to draw the attention of delegations to the well-known Russian initiative for the creation of a global system to control the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. The international meeting of experts held on this issue in Moscow last week proved to be very useful.

We believe that now, on the eve of the NPT Review Conference, each participant of the bilateral and multilateral treaties which form an integral part of the holistic system of nuclear disarmament and which will ensure the implementation of the obligations under article 6 of the NPT, should do their utmost to strengthen these treaties, and not to destroy them.

The Russian Federation supports the process of a truly global ban on anti-personnel landmines (APLs). At the current time, we are working hard to prepare the ratification of the amended, "landmines" Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Even so, we are already partly implementing in practice a number of its provisions, especially those relating to mine-clearance activities. We have repeatedly affirmed, including at the highest level, our support for the noble goals of the Ottawa Convention.

We view the complete ban on mines as a goal which we should move towards via a series of agreed phases. The first, as we see it, could be a ban on the transfer of APLs. By stopping the spread of mines at a global level, we will be able significantly to limit their uncontrolled use, which is the main cause of landmine disasters.

Today, there is probably no alternative forum to the Conference on Disarmament which could enlist the involvement in negotiations of key producers and users of APLs, and also achieve constructive cooperation between States parties and non-parties to the Ottawa Convention.

In this context, we express our readiness to discuss, under item 6 of the Conference's agenda - the comprehensive programme of disarmament, the question of a gradual prohibition of APLs. As a first step in this direction, the CD could take up the elaboration of a universal agreement banning the transfer of APLs. At the same time, we are convinced that the landmine problem needs to be resolved in a comprehensive way, taking into account the real defence-related and economic capabilities of each State and its geopolitical situation.

Russia attaches great importance to the issue of transparency in conventional armaments, since it recognizes its positive role in creating a climate of confidence among different countries. Transparency in arms deliveries could be a key tool for preventing the destabilizing stockpiling of arms and for averting armed conflicts. We think that it would be useful, for the purposes of

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

checking the destabilizing process of stockpiling conventional arms, if that transparency came first of all from importers, because it is precisely for them - rather than for exporters - that information on arms procurement is more sensitive in terms of national security.

Much work has already been done in this regard in the disarmament process. We believe that, in considering this issue, the Conference on Disarmament should define its role and possible contribution, in order to avoid duplicating efforts undertaken in other international forums.

As to the organizational aspect of the Conference's operation, the Russian delegation would not object to the re-establishment of the posts, which existed in 1998, of Special Coordinators on the expansion of its membership, on its improved and effective functioning, and also on its agenda. There is certainly room for improvement in the work of the Conference. But here, too, it is necessary to grasp clearly the limits beyond which attempts at constructive work become counterproductive. In particular, we, like many others, have opposed and will continue to oppose any attempts to abrogate, weaken or revise the rule whereby decisions are taken by the Conference only on the basis of consensus.

Disarmament issues are, without question, complex and their solution demands from all States the necessary will, realism and readiness for compromise. All this places an added responsibility upon us. We are confident that, with your experience and under your wise guidance, the work of the Conference will be given additional impetus in the second part of its session. You may count on our full cooperation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now call upon the representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): May I first, in my national capacity, congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the full support of my delegation in your important and difficult tasks. I trust that your well-known diplomatic skills and experience will facilitate tackling this daunting challenge. I would also like to express my deep appreciation for all the intensive efforts undertaken by your predecessors, Ambassadors Kreid and Chowdhury, to move the Conference forward.

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

As the first part of the session of the Conference on Disarmament of the new millennium draws to a close, we have to conclude that we have yet again been unable to start substantive

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

work in the Conference on Disarmament. The continued inability of the Conference to reach agreement on substantive work is a source of deep concern to us. We do, however, remain of the opinion that agreement is within reach. In the different proposals which were put forward in 1999 and during this year, there were a number of common elements. These are:

(a) The re-establishment of the ad hoc committee under agenda item 1 to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices;

(b) The re-establishment of the ad hoc committee under agenda item 4 to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;

(c) The reappointment of a Special Coordinator under agenda item 6 to seek the views of the members of the Conference on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to anti-personnel mines, taking into account, inter alia, developments outside the Conference;

(d) The reappointment of a Special Coordinator under agenda item 7, entitled "Transparency in armaments", to seek the views of the members of the Conference on the most appropriate way to deal with questions related to this item;

(e) The reappointment of Special Coordinators to consider the review of the agenda of the Conference, the expansion of its membership, and its improved and effective functioning.

There is also agreement within the Conference to deal with the issues of nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space, although the most appropriate mechanisms and their mandates remain to be determined.

We propose that the Conference on Disarmament now take a decision to start substantive work on the five common elements listed above. With regard to the two important outstanding issues, nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space, we support the continuation of intensive consultations to find early agreement on how to deal with these matters, including mandates and mechanisms that could be established by the Conference on Disarmament. We will continue to make every effort to this end, taking into account past proposals and future initiatives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador Sanders.

Mr. SANDERS (Netherlands): As this is the first time that I take the floor in a plenary session of the Conference, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your nomination and express my full confidence in your professionalism to provide the appropriate guidance to help the Conference to make progress on its thorny path.

I have asked for the floor today to underscore the importance that the Netherlands traditionally attaches to arms control and disarmament. We do this in good faith and with a considerable degree of flexibility. We like to be perceived as compromise-seekers and bridge-builders. But this does not mean that we have no ideals and convictions. The Netherlands Government aims to strike the right balance between idealism and realism. In order to realize our ideals we need to be realistic about what is feasible in today's world and what is not.

An important example is nuclear disarmament. We strongly support the goal and ideal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we support every effort to get there. At the same time our realism tells us that this has to be a gradual process: arms reductions and disarmament are one and the same process, with the latter following from the relentless pursuit of the former.

I will return to nuclear issues later, but let me first give you a brief account of our ambitions and priorities in other areas of disarmament and arms control.

In the important area of small arms and light weapons, my country has been an active player. We have undertaken several initiatives within a number of international bodies like the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We were not overjoyed with the outcome of the recent session of the Preparatory Committee in New York, and we really want to appeal to all States to participate constructively in order to make better progress at the subsequent sessions of the Preparatory Committee. The Netherlands, for its part, will engage in inter-sessional discussions with all interested countries aimed at getting the procedural and substantive preparations for the 2001 Conference back on track. A successful outcome of that Conference will give an important impetus to regional and global efforts to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the destabilizing consequences of the excessive accumulation of small arms.

Our priority in the area of landmines is obviously the successful implementation and the promotion of the universality of the Ottawa Convention. We have contributed substantially to mine-clearing operations in various parts of the world and we will continue to do so. We hope to play a leading role in the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance that was established in Maputo. We are presently chairing the United Nations Mine Action Support Group, just to give a few specific examples.

A third area of priority in the field of conventional arms is our support for the United Nations Arms Register. We are actively participating in the Group of Governmental Experts. The Register currently covers more than 90 per cent of the transfers of conventional

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

armaments, but we hope that its participation and scope can be further enhanced. The register should continue to be a tool for conventional arms control. But we fully agree that transparency in armaments should not be limited to conventional weapons, and should also pertain to weapons of mass destruction.

In the field of chemical weapons-related declarations, we can say that we have achieved the maximum of transparency among the State parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We hope that many of you will have an opportunity to visit the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague. You will be impressed by the effectiveness and efficiency of this organization. There is no need for a register on Chemical Weapons: the Organization is in fact the register.

It is our ambition to achieve the same degree of transparency in the field of biological and toxin weapons-related declarations, on which a protocol is being negotiated not far from here. We do not deny that there are differences between chemical weapons and biological weapons, but still we think that we must try to achieve the maximum degree of compliance control through effective and realistic measures. Our commitment to these negotiations is also reflected in our bid to host the future organization for the implementation of the Protocol in The Hague.

This brings me to the third category of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, which is the main topic of my statement today. Just as for all other categories of weapons, transparency in the field of nuclear weapons is a priority item for the Netherlands. I will come back to this, but let me first make a number of general observations concerning nuclear disarmament.

For the Netherlands, the NPT Review Conference is a singularly important event on this year's arms control and disarmament calendar. We concede that the political landscape does not look particularly inviting at the moment. This, however, means to us that an even more active engagement is necessary, to achieve genuine progress on the road towards nuclear disarmament. We believe that the existing agenda for nuclear disarmament, as laid down in the Principles and Objectives agreed in 1995, is still an adequate vehicle for making progress. The point is that we need to revitalize it.

We think that a concerted effort by the nuclear-weapon States is a necessary condition for this revitalization. We have no doubt about the sincerity of the two nuclear-weapon States with the largest arsenals further to reduce these in the context of START II and in future negotiations on START III and beyond. But we hope to see some tangible progress ion the weeks to come.

We are concerned about the prospects for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which was successfully negotiated in 1996 under the chairmanship of one of my predecessors, Ambassador Ramaker. We hope that the non-ratification by the United States Congress will not cause delays in the ratification process of other signatory parties, including many non-nuclear-weapon States. We call on all those countries in this Conference that have not signed the Treaty to do so soon.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

On procedural issues of the NPT Review Conference, we have no strong views. We think that we should avoid wasting time and energy at the Conference itself on these issues, and we very much encourage the president-designate to clear those issues before the Review Conference starts. We can support the establishment of subsidiary bodies, provided that they have added value. They should not meet simultaneously with the respective main committees, and their lifespan should not extend beyond the duration of the Conference itself. On the final document or documents, we think that it does not make sense to start an argument right now. Let us wait and see at the end of the Conference what is feasible.

On the substance of the Conference, we would want to try to build upon the Principles and Objectives of the 1995 Review Conference. More specifically, in the context of nuclear disarmament, as laid down in paragraph 4C of the Principles and Objectives document, we would like to see whether we can further develop and specify the commitment contained in that paragraph. The key words that we have in mind are "transparency" and "accountability" by the nuclear-weapon States, and these two principles go hand-in-hand and will reinforce each other.

On transparency, we think that the United Kingdom has set the right example and made a very good beginning. We wonder whether it might be conceivable for all five nuclear-weapon States to provide the numbers of warheads, delivery systems and stocks of fissile materials that they possess, deployed and non-deployed, strategic and tactical. We were encouraged by the briefing that the United States gave us a few weeks ago. We hope that this example will be followed by the other nuclear-weapon States, and possibly be expanded to actual numbers.

On accountability, we would try to see whether agreement can be reached on a more binding and systematic procedure, whereby the five nuclear-weapon States commit themselves to providing periodically an account of what progress they have made on the road towards nuclear disarmament. In such a process, the non-nuclear NPT States parties should not just be spoken at; there should be a genuine exchange. The end result of this accountability should preferably be a written report. In the same accountability arrangement, the nuclear-weapon States could deliver on transparency, as I mentioned earlier. In this context, we also very much welcome the ideas that were presented by the then Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, when he addressed this Conference two weeks ago. Practical ideas like these may also help to improve the future review process.

The Netherlands also believes that there are creative and innovative ways to give heed to legitimate calls for more legally binding negative security assurances.

There are more things we would like to achieve at the NPT Review, but I wanted to limit myself to the major elements. In addition, I want to make the point that, within this Conference, we developed, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and Norway, a mandate for a working group on nuclear disarmament. I will refrain from reading the precise wording, and I realize that, for a number of countries, this carefully-crafted language does not go far enough. Yet I have to say that the perfect can sometimes be the enemy of the good. I refer once again to what I said at the beginning of my statement about idealism and realism.

(Mr. Sanders, Netherlands)

We would prefer to make at least a start with a debate on nuclear disarmament in this Conference, rather than being sentenced to an enduring stalemate.

The Netherlands is a founding member of both the European Union and NATO. This determines to a large extent our positions and choices. But within these loyalties and according to old democratic traditions, there is a considerable degree of freedom to give way to our national preoccupations. There is a sense of urgency among our population and within our Parliament about the need for further steps on the road towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. My Government shares these sentiments, and wishes to seize every opportunity to make progress. We make the proposals that I have addressed inspired by our long-standing traditions and ideals in the field of international peace and justice, while at the same time remaining aware of the restrictions that the real world imposes on what is feasible and what is not.

Mr. BALBONI ACQUA (Italy): Mr. President, as this is the first time I have asked for the floor under your presidency, may I begin by expressing my congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference, as well as my best wishes for your task. Let me assure you of my delegation's support in the difficult job you have undertaken. I would also like to welcome our new colleagues who have recently joined us in the Conference on Disarmament, namely, Ambassador Faessler of Switzerland and Ambassador Noboru of Japan. I look forward to cooperating closely with them in the future.

I would like to say a few words after the statement, supported by my delegation, made by the distinguished representative of Germany. My attention is drawn by the specific part of his statement which concerned the proposal to nominate a Special Coordinator on the landmines issue.

Italy signed and ratified the Ottawa Convention and it is taking part in the different sectors of its implementation with strong commitment and close attention.

In October 1997, that is, before the date of our signature of the Ottawa Convention, the Italian Parliament passed one of the most advanced pieces of legislation on this matter, banning in a full and very strict manner anti-personnel mines. With its national legislation, the fruit of the sensitivity to this issue of the Italian Parliament and of Italian public opinion, Italy wished to demonstrate its commitment to combating these weapons and to contributing to the further development of international humanitarian law. In this context, Italy has firmly resolved to work with the entire international community and to contribute to the continuing improvement of the global and coordinated strategy defined by the "Ottawa process" for the complete elimination of anti-personnel mines. For Italy, this strategy lays down the objective of universal participation in the Ottawa Convention, while providing for complementary measures fully consistent with the high international standard set by the Convention.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Maimeskul.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, let me congratulate you on the assumption of these important functions. Despite the current deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, we still hope that, during the second part of your tenure - or at least during the second part of the Conference's annual session - our forum will resume its substantial work within the framework of the appropriate subsidiary bodies and other mechanisms.

In this context, I should reiterate the call, addressed to the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 9 March 2000 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Borys Tarasyuk, to resume, without further delay, talks on a fissile material cut-off treaty and on the issue of negative security assurances in the respective ad hoc committees.

We are also convinced that it is feasible and achievable to carry out substantial work on the issues which were recognized previously as non-controversial ones, while continuing intensive, meaningful consultations on the mandates and formats of the subsidiary bodies for two fundamental critical issues, namely, general aspects of nuclear disarmament and PAROS.

We therefore support the statement made a few minutes ago by our German colleague, Ambassador Seibert, on behalf of 22 delegations.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me to use this occasion to bid farewell to our distinguished colleague and friend, Ambassador Illanes of Chile, and to wish him and his family success and happiness.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement and for the warm words addressed to the President and I now call upon the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Draganov.

Mr. DRAGANOV (Bulgaria): On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I would also like to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to express my best wishes for success and declare my delegation's readiness to support you in your important endeavours. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Faessler and Ambassador Noboru and to assure them of my delegation's continued support and cooperation. My words of appreciation and wishes for well-being and further success go to Ambassador Illanes, with whom it has been a privilege to work.

The reason for my taking the floor today is to express the principal position of our delegation and associate the Republic of Bulgaria with the statement made by Ambassador Seibert on behalf of a number of countries today. It is our concern that, at the end of the first part of this year's session, the Conference on Disarmament has still not been able to start substantive work. We also think that there are a number of common elements in the

(Mr. Draganov, Bulgaria)

different proposals put forward in 1999 and during this year and believe that a decision to start substantive work on those elements can open the way to overcoming the deadlock in the other important spheres of our work as well. To my mind, not to do so would be, apart from all else - and I would not want to repeat what has already been said - a sheer waste of time, effort and tax-payers' money.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Lithuania.

Mr. NAVIKAS (Lithuania): I am taking the floor for the first time at this session of the Conference. Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as to thank your predecessors for their valuable contributions to the work of the Conference. My delegation is convinced that with your diplomatic skills and vast experience, you will successfully guide the Conference through this difficult period in its work. Let me offer you the full support of the Lithuanian observer delegation and wish you all success in discharging your important duties.

I would like to refer to the statement made today by the Ambassador of Germany on behalf of a group of countries. My delegation would like strongly to support the statement, as it offers, in our view, a way of moving forward in the work of the Conference, by securing the possible elements of its work that seem to enjoy common support and by working hard on the others with a view to finding an early agreement. Most important, this approach could create a momentum for overcoming the deadlock at the Conference and thus address the greatest concern, that of the paralysis of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which you, Mr. President, expressed in your opening statement.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the representative of Lithuania for his statement and for the warm words addressed to the President. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Slovakia.

Mr. MISTRÍK (Slovakia): Mr. President, in the absence of our Ambassador, allow me to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. May I also assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation in your efforts to move the Conference towards substantive work.

I would like to express my delegation's support for the statement delivered a short while ago by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany. The common elements described in that statement have been directly or indirectly supported by my delegation in the past and I would now like to reiterate our support. My delegation believes that a chance should be given for substantive work to start on these elements.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Slovakia for his statement and the kind words addressed to the President and I call on the distinguished representative of Romania.

Mr. HORUMBA (Romania): Mr. President, in the absence of my Ambassador, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to extend my congratulations to your predecessors for their work and their efforts to reach a solution on the programme of work of our Conference. In this regard, I extend the support of the delegation of Romania to the proposal contained in the statement by the delegation of Germany on behalf of a number of other delegations and the declaration of readiness to start substantive work on those items of the agenda where common agreement seems to be reached. In this context, I take this opportunity to underline the importance my delegation attaches to the early re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee under agenda item 1, to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices.

Mr. FERNÁNDEZ SALORIO (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Allow me to welcome you as President of the Conference and to assure you of the full support of our delegation in your tasks.

I have asked for the floor, in order to convey, on behalf of Ambassador Sánchez Arnau and the entire Argentine delegation, and also on my behalf, our sadness at the departure of one of the very important ambassadors at the Conference on Disarmament, the distinguished representative of our sister Republic of Chile, Ambassador Illanes. We shall miss his knowledge, his experience and the invariably kind and calm way in which he conveyed his advice. We wish Ambassador Illanes and his family the very best success and happiness in the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Argentina for his statement and his words of support to the President and I now call on the distinguished representative of Albania.

Mr. BENDO (Albania): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, on behalf of the Albanian mission, since my Ambassador is not present here, on the position you have taken up recently.

I should like to be brief in my statement and to join the many previous distinguished speakers who have supported the statement of the Ambassador of Germany. I would like to stress that Albania fully supports the statement and the common elements proposed therein.

Mr. PATRIOTA (Brazil) (translated from Spanish): Like my Argentine Colleague, I would like, on behalf of Ambassador Amorim and our entire delegation, to express our sadness at the departure of Ambassador Illanes. As representative of Chile, our sister nation, he has shown exceptional diplomatic skills, both personal and professional, and we will miss him a great deal. We wish him and his family every happiness and success upon his return to his country.

Mr. LAURIE-ESCANDON (Peru) (translated from Spanish): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor in your term of office, we would like to congratulate you most sincerely and pledge all our support to you in your important and difficult duties.

I have asked for the floor to express, on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Peru and the entire Peruvian delegation, our appreciation for the very laudable work done by Ambassador Illanes of Chile in the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador Illanes carried out his work as Special Coordinator with unflagging enthusiasm and understanding, in seeking ways to improve the work of the Conference. Our delegation gave its full support to the proposals of Ambassador Illanes and we are very sad that the Conference did not take any decision on those proposals. In addition to his work as Special Coordinator, he always tried to seek consensus to foster the work of the Conference. For that reason and for his eminent personal and professional skills the delegation of Peru will miss him sorely. For my own part, I can say that Ambassador Illanes has been a source of inspiration and I regret his departure. I wish him every success in the future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Peru for his statement and kind words addressed to the President. Now I call on the distinguished representative of Spain.

Ms. RICO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): I, too, wish to join in the congratulations extended to you on your recent assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, as I have not been able to do this before. I also wish to add my voice to the regrets and the good wishes conveyed to the Ambassador of Chile on his departure. He not only represented his country in this Conference for several years in a very masterful way, but he has also made continuous constructive contributions to our performance of our tasks and our work here, contributions which will continue to be felt after he has left us. In the view of my delegation and as demonstrated this morning, in the light of the many references made to him, his reputation is going to stay with us for a long time after his departure. On behalf of the Spanish delegation and the Spanish Government, I would like to wish him and his family all the very best for his future in Chile.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Spain for her statement and for her words of support and I call on the distinguished representative of Ecuador.

Mr. GALLEGOS-CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you and wish you every success. I also wish to add my voice to the words of those delegations who have taken the floor before me, to recognize the personal and professional leadership of Ambassador Illanes and, on behalf of the delegation of Ecuador, to praise his skill and leadership, which was invaluable to us during the three years we attended the Conference on Disarmament as observers and instrumental in securing our position today as members of the Conference. I would like to wish him and his family good fortune and to pay tribute to his personal qualities, both as a gentleman and a distinguished diplomat.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Ecuador for his statement and words of support.

With that my list of speakers for this meeting has been exhausted. As there are no delegations wishing to take the floor, before we adjourn the meeting, I would like now to inform you of the progress of my consultations.

As you know, over recent days I have been conducting intensive and wide-ranging consultations on a bilateral basis with a large number of delegations. The purpose of these consultations is to see, first, how delegations assess the deadlock in the Conference; and, second, how delegations view and assess the reasons and factors responsible for this situation. The aim was to determine whether, in the views of delegations, there are possibilities of overcoming these factors and whether delegations see any specific approaches which would enable us, at the level of practical compromise rather than that of national positions, to set in motion the practical work of the Conference.

These consultations have shown that the overwhelming majority of delegations consider it entirely unrealistic to try and solve the intractable problems arising in the Conference before it suspends its work tomorrow. Accordingly, as the consultations have shown, most delegations believe that it would not be productive for the President to seek new compromise proposals during this period.

The consultations have also shown, on the other hand, that all delegations have some hope of progress in developments outside the Conference in the period before the Conference begins the second part of its 2000 session on 24 May. Delegations also hope that developments in this period could create a new window of opportunity for the Conference to solve the intractable problems relating to the programme of work and causing the current deadlock in the Conference. In the light of the impetus gained in those consultations, I intend to proceed as follows.

First, to continue the consultations I have begun with a view to identifying a process that could meet with consensus support by the Conference. In this connection, I invite all delegations wishing to make an additional contribution to these consultations and to submit proposals on possible ways and means of solving our problem, to have no hesitation in approaching me, including in the inter-sessional period and also during my absence from Geneva, through the delegation of Belarus.

Second, immediately before the start of the second part of this session of the Conference and during the very first days of its work, to conduct a new round of consultations to determine whether delegations, at that new stage, see possible solutions that might unblock the situation and, if so, what these solutions are. The action of the President for the remaining period of his term of office will be determined by delegations' responses to these questions. Obviously, in operational terms, this period will not be long - 10-12 days after the resumption of our work. In

(The President)

this connection, I would request that delegations have determined, by the beginning of the next part of our session and bearing in mind any developments that have occurred by that time, possible parameters within which they can manoeuvre. As President, I would like these parameters to be as broad and flexible as possible, and believe that they should respect the need to maintain the high standing of the Conference on Disarmament. Today much has been said about this.

On this note, we have completed our business for today and, effectively, for the first part of our annual session. I bid you farewell and I should like to announce that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 25 May 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.848
25 May 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 25 May 2000, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Sergei Martynov (Belarus)

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I declare open the 848th plenary meeting of the Conference and the second part of its 2000 session.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Ecuador and the Russian Federation. I give the floor to the representative of Ecuador, Ambassador Gallegos-Chiriboga.

Mr. GALLEGOS-CHIRIBOGA (Ecuador) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first I would like to say how pleased my delegation is to see you presiding over the work of the Conference on Disarmament at this session. I am convinced that, with your wealth of experience and great ability, you will move our work forward.

I would also like to convey my gratitude to your predecessors in this demanding post, who have shown remarkable devotion to the work of the Conference. I must also express my thanks to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, to his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and to all the secretariat officials for their willingness to help.

It is not my intention to repeat what I have already said on 24 June and 12 August 1999, when I once again set before you Ecuador's position on disarmament. Today I must bid farewell to the Conference on Disarmament after three years in which I have had the privilege of representing Ecuador in this negotiating body and taking part in its deliberations together with you my fellow representatives, all people of the highest intellect and diplomatic qualities. I wish to thank you all for the way in which you have cooperated with the delegation of Ecuador, in both a personal and an official capacity.

The current session of the Conference on Disarmament is the first in this new century and I believe, as I prepare to leave this forum, that we should reflect on certain issues and recall that the peoples of the world are calling for peace and for the elimination of weapons of all types, but in particular those of mass destruction. My country is convinced that disarmament is the path to peace and progress. If the money invested in arms were to be used instead for the good of humankind, the world would be a different place.

Since I first arrived in Geneva in June 1997, and until August 1999, Ecuador attended meetings of the Conference on Disarmament as an observer country. Following lengthy consultations and intricate negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament adopted decision CD/1588, whereby Ecuador and four other countries were brought into the Conference on Disarmament as members. I shall always look back on the unanimous approval of Ecuador's membership as acknowledgement of my country's position on disarmament and of its strong presence in the collective efforts of the international community. This was, without any doubt, one of the highlights of my diplomatic career.

Ecuador views its entry into the Conference on Disarmament as the logical conclusion of its firm commitment to disarmament, a commitment that it has expressed in the General Assembly of the United Nations, as well as at the regional level and in bilateral contexts. The lack of consensus on the disarmament agenda endangers peace and international security.

(Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, Ecuador)

It is therefore essential that we make progress towards an agreement that will enable us to start the substantive work of this negotiating body. My delegation believes that we should not bog this substantive work down with procedural discussions and debates. Accordingly, this Conference must discharge its mandate as quickly as possible.

This mandate is more like an ethical imperative, more a moral responsibility. It is not a mere political responsibility, based on interests, but rather something which impinges on the very existence of humanity and therefore entails an absolute imperative to place this issue at the very top of the international agenda.

The difficulties encountered in trying to speed up specific negotiations on disarmament demonstrate the lack of agreement on the global agenda and on substantive measures to be taken to ensure security in the post-cold war era. The total failure to reach consensus reflects the uncertainties of a world still trying to find its way in the new international order and to adapt the way it functions to present-day realities. The new political paradigm that has arisen, more than a decade since the collapse of the Berlin wall, has left us still uncertain about the perils and opportunities of this new order. We remain hostages to conflicts and lack of trust, rivalry and clashes, which prevent us making progress towards a more just and equitable world.

My delegation wishes to draw attention again to the content of the communiqué of the Rio Group on the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to reiterate its support for efforts by the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral, effective and internationally verifiable international treaty which prohibits the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in line with the objectives of non-proliferation and of nuclear disarmament. This major negotiating process must be launched as soon as possible.

My delegation will endeavour as always to see that progress is made and appeals to those countries which are obstructing the difficult path to disarmament to adopt a position of cooperation with the international community, rather than one of confrontation. Let us strive together for the most important goal of humankind: peace.

I am honoured to have been the first Ecuadorian ambassador to have represented our country as a full member of the Conference on Disarmament and to bear witness before you that the people and Government of the Republic of Ecuador are confident that the mechanisms for peaceful negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament will finally banish the use of these instruments of destruction and death.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): I thank the distinguished representative of Ecuador for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the President and the members of the Conference. I am certain that you will all join me in extending to the distinguished Ambassador of Ecuador, Mr. Gallegos-Chiriboga, our gratitude for his contribution to the work of the Conference over the years that we have been together. We all wish you the very best, to you and your family, in your further duties. Thank you. I now call on the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Sidorov.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, the Conference is beginning the work of the second part of its 2000 session against the background of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT, which has just successfully ended in New York - the first review conference since the adoption in 1995 of the historic decision to extend the NPT indefinitely. Russia highly appreciates the outcome of this forum, which has reaffirmed the significance of the Treaty as a fundamental element of international law promoting global and regional stability and security and posing a sound barrier to the spread of nuclear weapons on the globe. Apart from the non-proliferation dimension, the NPT is a unique instrument fostering nuclear disarmament, as well as international cooperation in using the atom for peaceful purposes. I should like to emphasize that the just concluded Review Conference has vividly demonstrated that the Treaty remains one of the most significant mechanisms in the area of arms control and disarmament, a model for the cooperation of the members of the world community and an example of the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy.

Mr. President, the foreign policy priorities of the Russian Federation belong without question to a philosophy that favours disarmament. In his message to the participants at the NPT Review Conference, the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Putin, unequivocally declared: "Russia is committed to its obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament and intends to continue to abide by them in the conditions of maintaining strategic stability and of the system established over recent decades of disarmament treaties as a basis for further reductions and limitations of strategic offensive arms."

By successively ratifying a number of key disarmament agreements - the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II), the 1997 New York package of START and ABM-related agreements and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty - Russia has confirmed its readiness in deed, and not just in words, to fulfil the above-mentioned principles. We have circulated our statements to this effect as official documents of the Conference. We are firmly convinced that the implementation of these agreements would constitute a major step towards nuclear non-proliferation.

We should note here that the approval of the START II Treaty by Russia means that only a part of the road has been covered towards launching its practical implementation. It is now up to the United States side to act, by ratifying the 1997 New York package of START and ABM-related agreements. We are convinced that the earliest approval of these documents will serve the interests of both the United States and Russia and will assist in the maintaining of global stability as a whole. In addition, we are prepared to go further towards deeper cuts in nuclear potential. It should be recalled that the levels of nuclear arsenals which it is planned to establish under the START III agreements do not represent absolute limits. We are prepared to consider the reduction of nuclear arsenals to 1,500 warheads. As a result, it should be possible not only to implement nuclear disarmament agreements and initiatives but also to make a new breakthrough, both qualitative and quantitative, in the area of deep reductions in strategic offensive arms. This is the direction we intend to pursue henceforth.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

We fully comprehend the interest shown by many of our partners in the main areas of Russian foreign policy and, in particular, in the role which the nuclear factor plays in our country's military doctrine as adopted in April this year. I want to note that this doctrine is exclusively defensive in nature. I believe that the decisions on START II and the CTBT offer a clear signal to the international community to this effect. I should only add that strengthening the non-proliferation regimes is considered to be one of the main priorities of Russia's national security approach.

In that context, we must note once again the role and significance of the 1972 ABM Treaty as the key element of strategic stability and an important condition for the reduction of strategic offensive weapons. The need to safeguard and strengthen these agreements was unequivocally reaffirmed in the statements by the overwhelming majority of the participants at the NPT Review Conference in New York. Unfortunately, the trend towards the erosion of this agreement and even refusal to honour its main provisions is still evident and even growing stronger.

We should like our partners to be entirely clear on this matter. Further efforts in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament and, first and foremost, nuclear disarmament cannot be considered other than in close connection with the preservation of the ABM Treaty. The meaning and historic role of this document are not confined merely to the sphere of Russian-United States relations. It should be borne in mind that the ABM Treaty underpins the entire modern-day system of arms control agreements. Should one of its component parts be weakened, the entire system would be thrown off balance. In the conditions of globalization, there are countless more interconnections between these various elements. Accordingly, the collapse of the ABM Treaty would in effect disrupt the entire range of disarmament agreements created over the past 30 years and increase the threat of erosion of the regimes of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means.

In response to those who oppose the idea of preserving the ABM Treaty as it stands and to those who justify their position by referring to the growing missile threats from the so-called "rogue States", we should like to stress our deep conviction that the issue of missile proliferation can and must be dealt with without disrupting the ABM Treaty. As counterbalance to the military approach to the issue, we suggest a more constructive option - namely, political and diplomatic measures. We are ready to engage in the broadest possible consultations on this subject with all interested countries. This is precisely what the President of the Russian Federation is aiming at, with his initiative to establish a global missile and missile technology non-proliferation control system. Its phased implementation on a broad voluntary basis would be a step in the right direction.

Thus, there is a real alternative to the collapse of the ABM Treaty and this alternative is steadily becoming more clearly defined. It is based on further deep reductions in nuclear weapons, collective steps to counter the threat of the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies, cooperation concerning non-strategic missile defence systems on the basis of

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

the 1997 New York arrangements, a joint analysis of the real extent of the "new" missile threats and the strengthening of confidence-building measures in international affairs. The choice of this particular option will be crucial not only to the survival of the non-proliferation regimes but also to a positive future for world affairs as a whole.

Mr. President, I have already drawn attention on a number of occasions to the sensitivity of the Conference on Disarmament to events in the world at large. The unfavourable development of the international landscape over the last two years has prevented the Conference from starting its substantive work in the most pressing areas of disarmament and arms control. We believe that the successful conclusion of the NPT Review Conference, which has approved the five-year plan of action in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, will give positive impetus to efforts to overcome the stalemate in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We have reached an important threshold: either we shall succeed in our joint efforts to preserve and multiply the positive effects achieved in the area of disarmament and arms control during the post-cold war period, or we shall slide away from the previously achieved agreements and face the real prospect of chaos and uncontrollable international processes which can only be regulated by the diktat of military power. We do not think that such a prospect is in anybody's interests.

For our part, we should like to reaffirm that the tasks of beginning the elaboration of an international legal regime capable of preventing an arms race in outer space remain among our top priorities. We favour the immediate launching of work on an agreement which would end the further production of weapons-grade fissile materials. We are ready to facilitate in every possible way the earliest resumption of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on this issue.

As for the discussions in the Conference on nuclear disarmament issues, we have repeatedly demonstrated our flexibility in considering balanced initiatives, genuinely aimed at reaching compromise. We intend to stick to this path.

Mr. President, may I in conclusion assure all participants in the Conference on Disarmament that the Russian delegation stands ready to continue to demonstrate, through the practical steps that it takes, its commitment to the objectives and tasks facing our Conference. It is our intention to continue our constructive cooperation with you and all our colleagues in order to begin substantive work in the Conference, with a view to ensuring steady progress on the road to disarmament and arms control.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Russian): This concludes my list of speakers for today. I see no other delegation wishing to take the floor at this meeting.

As you are aware, now that the Conference on Disarmament has started the second part of its 2000 session, I have embarked on a new round of consultations on its programme of work, in the hope that the momentum created by recent developments during the inter-sessional period will help us overcome the current impasse in the Conference and finally start our substantive work.

(The President)

During these consultations, particular attention is being given to studying the possibilities of resolving issues relating to prevention of an arms race in outer space and to nuclear disarmament.

Many delegations have approached me with the request that they be granted more time to review their positions in the light of developments over the inter-sessional period. Accordingly, I shall continue my consultations and intend to report to the Conference on their progress or outcome at our next plenary meeting.

As Thursday of next week, 1 June 2000, is an official holiday and the Palais des Nations is closed, the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 30 May 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.849
30 May 2000

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 30 May 2000, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr.Sergei Martynov (Belarus)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 849th plenary meeting of the Conference.

I should like at the outset to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of all the Conference, to the new representative of Tunisia, Ambassador Hatem Ben Salem, and to assure him of our full cooperation and support.

For today, I do not have any speakers inscribed on my list. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? This does not seem to be the case. Accordingly, I would now like to report on the status of the consultations which I started last week.

You will recall that we parted before the recess in anticipation of a possible new, reinvigorated effort at the Conference, which then appeared feasible as a development parallel to events unfolding outside the Conference but one which would nevertheless have a bearing on its work. After all, one of the things on which we all agree is that the Conference on Disarmament does not operate in a vacuum and has to react to developments in the outside world.

I also informed you at our last meeting before the recess that I intended, immediately before the start of the second part of the Conference's 2000 session and during the very first days of its work, to conduct a new round of consultations to determine whether delegations, at this new stage, saw possible solutions that might unblock the situation and, if so, what those solutions were.

Accordingly, I undertook intensive consultations with delegations, including through the chairs of the regional groups.

The most important factor that emerged from my consultations of last week, and also this week, is that many delegations came back to the resumed session of the Conference on Disarmament with the sense that there was now a new window of opportunity.

As President, I should like to emphasize that this marks an important change in the prevailing mood and view of the Conference's prospects, as compared to the situation before the recess.

The consultations revealed, however, that delegations need more time to analyse in-depth the new opportunities and explore specific ways to apply them in the context of the Conference on Disarmament

It has also become clear from the consultations that the time-frame for such analysis and exploration, as well as for the formulation, if feasible, of adjusted approaches to the issues before the Conference, takes us well beyond the remaining days of my presidency.

(The President)

The consultations also reveal a clear understanding within the Conference on Disarmament that an important meeting of minds has yet to occur to enable this "climate change" to be translated into new Conference realities and, indeed, into new Conference language.

Understandably, such a meeting of minds has to occur, above all, on priority issues, issues upon which the establishment by consensus of the programme of work hinges.

As has clearly emerged from the consultations, such issues are, undoubtedly, the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and nuclear disarmament. Without an agreement on the format and mandate for their consideration, a programme of work does not seem feasible. It has become abundantly clear that any stand-alone decisions are now beyond our reach and probably even consideration.

In spite of the well-known difficulties in bridging the gaps in positions of PAROS and nuclear disarmament, I continue these efforts with the delegations that are most concerned, in the hope of a successful outcome in respect of the priority issues outlined above.

It has also been indicated in our consultations that, in some areas, in particular that related to the issue of PAROS, there have been no changes in the core realities outside the Conference on Disarmament. This factor obviously affects the continued consideration of this issue in the Conference.

Along with these circumstances there are two more factors which, I believe, we as a Conference need to take into account.

One is the time factor. We are already in the middle of the year 2000 without having reached agreement even on a programme of work, not to mention any agreement on substance on the issues before us. There is not much time to spare before the end of this year's proceedings of the Conference.

The second factor is that now more than ever before, after important progress has been achieved at another disarmament-related event of major significance, the Conference can ill afford to be perceived as a far niente body.

Guided by these considerations, I proposed in the course of the consultations that, without detriment to a most intensive and persistent effort in the continued search for consensus on major issues and, thus, on a programme of work, the Conference might, at a point in time that it deems appropriate, engage in a focused plenary consideration of each of the issues from a comprehensive list before it. This could be a temporary, contingency option which would eventually lead to a normal programme of work.

I will not elaborate further on this proposal at this stage since I have already done so in my meetings yesterday with all the regional groups.

(The President)

I am grateful for the constructive feedback I received from regional groups and China on the contingency proposal. It was indicated at the presidential consultations yesterday by two regional groups and China that they supported in principle the idea of focused plenary meetings, to be considered later if necessary, while, at the current stage, the President and the Conference should concentrate, fully, intensively and as a matter of urgency, on the possibility of coming to agreement on major issues and a programme of work. One regional group particularly emphasized that, prior to further consideration of the contingency option, every possible effort must be made to explore the new window of opportunity for a programme of work. I cannot agree more strongly on the need for a really hard push on the priority issues. It is this that is reflected under the "Priority action" sub-heading in the contingency proposal. In order not to detract from the efforts to reach consensus on major issues, I am not submitting this proposal as a formal one. Instead, it has been made available to delegations informally, in a non-paper format and in language accommodating the remarks received, through the secretariat for possible consideration at a later stage, if the Conference deems it appropriate. At this late hour, though, the Conference would, in my opinion, be wise to hedge its bets.

In the meantime, I am grateful for the renewed mandate accorded to the President, as a matter of urgency, to continue his efforts to hammer out an agreement on the programme of work and major issues. Over the forthcoming days, as I serve out the last days of my Presidency, I will continue with this effort, which was launched early last week.

Since there have been no comments on issues at today's meeting, this is my report on the consultations and this leads me directly to the concluding part of my plenary statement. I see a delegate who wishes to take the floor. I give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, since I am unlikely to have another opportunity, let me take this opportunity to express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you preside over the meeting of the Conference and for the sincere efforts which you have made to advance the work of the Conference, even at this late stage in your presidency.

I have asked for the floor essentially because I believe that there can be no disagreement with your objective analysis of the situation that confronts the Conference. On the core issues, where disagreement has bedevilled our work, that is, on PAROS and on nuclear disarmament, my delegation does not see any early possibility of agreement, because in our discussions to date of these issues we have not envisaged a mandate which would involve negotiations in the Conference. This Conference a is negotiating body, and therefore, any machinery that we create or any mechanism that we set up which is not designed for negotiations is beyond the mandate of this Conference.

In the circumstances, my delegation felt that your idea of holding focused plenary meetings devoted to the various issues that are before us was a useful way of enabling the Conference on Disarmament to commence substantive work on these issues. The rules of procedure of this Conference provide that the work of the Conference shall be conducted in

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

plenary meetings and then they add: "as well as under any additional arrangements agreed by the Conference." Therefore, the absence of agreement on subsidiary bodies and their mandates cannot prevent this Conference from engaging in substantive work in plenary meetings, and this I understood to be the substance of your proposal.

My delegation, of course, could not totally endorse the language as presented in your informal paper but, in our view, there was indeed no need for a special language or special formal proposal to enable this Conference to get on with the job of addressing the substantial issues that it has before it. And even at this time, if you were to propose, under the rules of procedure, that a plenary meeting be held on a substantive issue or on successive issues, I believe that it would be quite unreasonable, and contrary to the rules of procedure, for any delegation to object to the holding of such a substantive meeting addressing a particular issue that is before this Conference. At least, that is the interpretation of my delegation. It would be unreasonable. Yes, you would require the consent of the Conference to hold the meeting, but for any delegation to oppose the holding of such a meeting would be contrary to the expectations of the rules of procedure of this Conference. Accordingly and in summary, my delegation would encourage you to put your proposal for a decision to the Conference and to enable this Conference to begin its substantive work on the issues that you have identified.

To wait in the expectation that we will reach agreement on a mandate and machinery, which has escaped us for so many months over the past year and a half, would in my opinion be an act not only of optimism - not to speak of the euphoria which some entertain after the interregnum of our meetings - but of an optimism bordering on unrealism, which will further retard the work of this Conference.

Thus, my suggestion to you would be to put your proposal in simple form in terms of the rules of procedure to the Conference for a decision, and my delegation for one would be very happy to support it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement. Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor at this point? I see none.

With regard to the proposal which was distributed on my behalf, I would like to say that this proposal, in my opinion, remains at the disposal of the Conference and delegates and, if the delegations and the members so wish, my delegation - even after I have left the post of President - will be prepared to continue work on this matter, with the consent of the Conference.

If there are no other remarks at this stage, I shall now proceed to the concluding part of my plenary statement as President.

I will not put you through the torture of a philosophical essay under the guise of concluding remarks but will limit myself to two brief observations.

The first is the following. Although the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament is not an entirely enjoyable experience, I would propose that, in the future, the mandate of the

(The President)

President be extended to eight working weeks, instead of four working weeks as it is now. In fact, I am moving this proposal precisely because Belarus will only get its next turn as President long after my retirement.

Seriously, I would hope that this proposal could be discussed in the future deliberations on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, because the current brief term envisaged in the rules of procedure does not give the President the opportunity to pursue a proposal to its logical conclusion, especially when delegations feel that they need more time. Of course, that could be precisely what the drafters had in mind when they drafted current rule 9 of the rules of procedure, envisaging just four weeks.

This is my second observation. In the fine tradition of the Conference on Disarmament, I will now declare the exact opposite of what I stated just a moment ago. I have immensely enjoyed working with each and everyone of you, Ambassadors and members of delegations. I have enjoyed your willingness to engage, to explore options, to be open-minded, if not forthcoming. I have enjoyed highly professional, top-of-the-line assistance from the secretariat.

My special thanks go to the regional coordinators, Ambassador Ali Khorram of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Kálmán Petőcz of Slovakia and Ambassador Bjørn Skogmo of Norway. I am particularly indebted to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Vladimir Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the staff of Conference Services.

My very best wishes to go to my successor as of next week, the Ambassador of Belgium, Jean Lint. I very much hope that delegations' new, forthcoming positions will ripen in good time for him and the Conference to reap their fruit.

As I have indicated, I will continue my consultations on the major issues before the Conference until the end of this week and, accordingly, I am available to delegations at any time during this period.

It only remains for me to announce that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 8 June 2000, at 10 a.m.

I say good-bye to those of you whom I will not be in a position to contact in the coming days, and wish the best of luck to all of you.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.850
8 June 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 June 2000, at 10.20 a.m.

President: Mr. Jean Lint (Belgium)

GE.00-61750 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 850th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished colleagues, as you know, a memorial service was held today in Tokyo for the late Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Kaiso Obuchi, and was attended by a large number of heads of State and Government. The late Prime Minister fell ill on 1 April 2000 and died on 14 May 2000. In his capacity first as Foreign Minister and then as Prime Minister, he made a major contribution to world peace as well as to the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I wish to express our sincere condolences to his family and to the Japanese people.

I now call on my colleague, the distinguished Ambassador of Japan.

Mr. NORBORU (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I should like to convey our deep appreciation for the kind words of condolence just expressed by the President today, the day of the official funeral service for our late Prime Minister. Such sympathy is much needed for his bereaved family as well as for the Japanese people at this time of national mourning. His sudden illness and death were especially sad for me because I had worked as his foreign policy adviser in the Prime Minister's Office until my appointment as Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in January 2000. His last message to me, the day before my departure from Tokyo, was that I should make the utmost efforts to advance disarmament, including an endeavour to ensure the successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference. I am positive that he would have been satisfied with recent developments. Mr. President, I thank you again for your very kind words, and I will convey them to my Government as well as to the family of the late Prime Minister Obuchi.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank my colleague the Ambassador of Japan for his statement.

As this is the beginning of Belgium's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to make a few remarks as President.

First of all I would like to thank my predecessors this year in the President's chair, Ambassadors Kreid, Chowdray and Martinez, who all worked towards the same elusive goal of defining a balanced programme of work that is acceptable to all. Now it is my turn to take up the challenge and bring this task to a successful conclusion. I can assure you that I will spare no effort to achieve this and, at the outset, I would like to thank the many delegations which have assured me of their support.

The time has come for urgent action and for transparency. I doubt whether the international community will accept that, for the second year in a row, an institution with such competence and talent can fail to reach agreement on a programme which would in fact only commit it to doing its job. Part of this job consists in defining the criteria to be followed in

(The President)

seeking appropriate solutions to one of the major concerns of mankind: disarmament, an ideal enshrined in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, which states "We the people of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

In this area, however, where idealism is rapidly giving way to the realism of security concerns, my country places its trust in the existing structures and recognizes that the Conference on Disarmament is the only forum where these problems can at least be negotiated, if not resolved.

We hope that all the members of the Conference on Disarmament will make a constructive contribution during this session, where every effort shall have to be made to attain the modest goals which we have set ourselves, such as the launching of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for military purposes and the elaboration of mandates to deal in an appropriate manner with nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Aside from the role that Belgium intends to play in the Conference, it has also been working to ensure the universality and full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Here we welcome the fact that, at the last meeting of the States parties, 10 new States acceded to that international instrument and we call on other States to follow their example.

With regard to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, my country hopes that the Ad Hoc Group set up to draft a verification protocol will fairly soon - if possible before the Convention's Review Conference in 2001 - conclude its work.

Belgium also aims to combat the proliferation of light weapons and small arms. In this context, Belgium calls upon States to cooperate in a constructive spirit in preparing the Conference, scheduled for 2001, on the illicit traffic in those weapons.

Let me also recall the importance which we attach to the problem of anti-personnel mines. Belgium was the first country in the world to introduce legislation banning anti-personnel mines. It actively participated in the elaboration of the Ottawa Convention and is now working on implementation of the Treaty and promoting its universality. We hope that the second meeting of States parties, to be held in Geneva in September 2000, will have a successful outcome.

The last Belgian presidency was in 1992. At that time my colleague, the late Ambassador Servais, who was my first guide in matters of disarmament, welcomed the conclusion of work to negotiate the Convention on Chemical Weapons and asked the Ambassador of Romania to report on the activities during that year of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which he had chaired. Then, as today, Brazil had sat to the left of Belgium and the Ambassador of Brazil at that time was our friend

(The President)

Ambassador Amorim. I hope that in 2011, at the next Belgian presidency, my then colleague will be able to say that, in 2000, the Conference on Disarmament had reached agreement on a programme of work after a long period of paralysis. That is my cherished hope.

For today, I have no speakers on my list. Is there any delegation wishing to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I would like to introduce a new practice. Here I shall be working without any notes, following a method which, I believe, one of my colleagues has already attempted in the past, with a view to bringing greater transparency to the work and consultations conducted by the President.

I have now been in this chair for three days and I regret that I have not as yet been able to speak to each and every one of you. I have, however, been able to report to the members of my regional group as well as the coordinators of regional groups on the consultations which I have launched. Working together with certain friends, whom I thank here, we have been preparing what I believe is our key task at this stage of the year, namely, a programme of work which includes the elements deemed by most member countries as priority issues. In my more formal statement, I said that the time had come for urgent action and that we cannot allow a second year to go by without breaking the deadlock.

In this programme of work, I have incorporated three elements familiar to us all. The first relates to fissile material. Here, for a long time, we have had a text that is accepted by all and so far I have not heard any delegation say that it was not ready to negotiate this text. I have been told by delegations that they wanted to tie this negotiation to other elements in the programme of work.

The second element in the programme is nuclear disarmament. This is a concern of most countries represented here. In the preparation of the text, I would like to pay tribute to my colleague from Algeria, Ambassador Dembri, who encouraged me to try and rework the text in a way that might satisfy all delegations, taking into account developments since my colleague prepared the original draft.

The third element is the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a major concern for a large number of delegations which must be taken on board. I can assure you that finding an acceptable compromise between the very divergent positions is no easy task, but, I urge all delegations involved in this issue to show a spirit of flexibility and compromise at this stage in the year. Without such spirit we will never find a solution.

I have circulated this draft text to a number of delegations and I am awaiting their response so that I can continue work. I will get back to you, time permitting but I hope that people will not tell me that they are waiting for instructions, in this day and age of e-mail and GSM, and we no longer have to send the diplomatic pouch by transatlantic steamer. If I get a prompt response, I hope to give you, in the course of next week, on either Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning, a text that could then be submitted to the regional groups.

(The President)

Like my colleague from Belarus, I am happy to accept invitations from regional groups to present this draft programme to them. At the same time, I urge you not to slow down the work of the Conference with procedural arguments. In the draft text, I have endeavoured to respect the Conference's rules of procedure. One possibly sensitive point relating to procedure is rule 23 of our rules of procedure, which provides that the Conference may establish subsidiary bodies or groups and that these subsidiary groups could take the form of ad hoc subcommittees or working groups, or other forms. Nowhere in the rules of procedure does it say that an ad hoc committee is superior to a working group or that the task of an ad hoc committee is necessarily that of negotiating. I hope that this may be borne in mind and that no time is wasted on procedural matters of this nature.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza.

Mr. DE ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me to extend very warm congratulations to you on having assumed the presidency and at the same time to commend your predecessor on his efforts. My delegation naturally supports all that you are doing and we will be very pleased to consider the text that you say that you have been able to show some delegations. My delegation is not one of those. I cannot guarantee, Sir, that, when I am apprised of the text, I might not have to consult my authorities and might not need time for that purpose. For the sake of transparency, allow me to remind you that the programme of work is a single whole. It is difficult to work piecemeal on fragments that we do not know and, as I recall, in international law there is a prohibition on weapons with non-detectable fragments.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I can assure my colleague, the Ambassador of Mexico, that I shall exercise the greatest transparency and equality of treatment on all subjects. I now call upon the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, we are very happy with the new tradition of transparency which you are seeking to establish in the Conference. Transparency is always very useful and perhaps needs to be conditioned only by a sense of modesty. But I would like to say that my delegation, too, which happens at the moment to be the Coordinator of the Group of 21, has not seen your text. I would therefore seek further transparency from you, and to ascertain, if possible, which delegations, in your view, deserve the privilege of having received the text without the members of the Group of 21 having had the same privilege.

As you know, we are positively disposed, as a group, to the efforts you are making and we wish to remain positive, but I would add that transparency must be accompanied by equity and equality of treatment for all members of the Conference on Disarmament. This is a principle from which we will not deviate.

My second comment, Mr. President, I make not as the Coordinator of the Group of 21 but as the representative of Pakistan. You have spoken of three issues on which you are working and on which you will be drafting texts, and we look forward to seeing those. But we had also agreed in the past - I think it was two years ago - to establish another ad hoc committee. This

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

was the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances. May I presume that this will also be part of the programme of work? I would of course be grateful for a clarification from you as to your own intentions with regard to that issue. I also note that, in my understanding, there is no objection to establishing an ad hoc committee in this Conference with that mandate.

Finally, Mr. President, with regard to the rules of procedure, I think it is very clear that any mechanism that we establish in this Conference, which has a mandate as the sole negotiating body for multilateral disarmament, is a negotiating mechanism. We are not here for discussion and for debate. Any mechanism - no matter how its mandate may be worded - is part of this Conference. This Conference is a negotiating body and therefore any mechanism that is set up is a mechanism for negotiation. We, as a delegation, do not wish to accept any interpretation to the contrary and we will make that clear at the appropriate time.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement. As for the first part of his statement, I can say, as I said to my colleague from Mexico, that there will of course be equality of information, but in a context where we work more in terms of years, so I ask you to give me one or two minutes so that I can give you a text that has some chance of being accepted. As for the second point raised by the Ambassador of Pakistan, if there is a consensus in the Conference to establish an ad hoc group on negative security assurances, then it certainly will not be the President who decides not to include this element in a programme of work, given that the agenda makes provision for it. Third, it is clear that the definition of the Conference on Disarmament is well known to us all here and derives from paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I am grateful for the clarification. I am not sure whether I understand precisely what you mean about sharing texts in some sort of sequential order with various delegations. I am sure you must have your reasons. But I would plead that, if there is to be transparency, it should be accompanied by equity, and we would not wish your process to be stalled because we have been treated unequally.

Second, with regard to the question of negative security assurances, I wonder why, if the text that you are proposing contains a proposal for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on a fissile material treaty - which we had previously established and whose mandate you do not propose to change - your text would not contain a proposal on negative security assurances, because it is exactly the same case. In fact, we were able to establish an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances at times when we were unable to establish an ad hoc committee on fissile material. Accordingly, should not your text also contain a fourth proposal, which relates to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, following the same principle as that which you apply to the fissile material treaty? This is a question which I put to you, and I would be grateful for a response as to why the negative security assurances text is missing from your proposal.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Pakistan for his statement. It is my belief that it is already quite ambitious, at this late stage in our session, to have a programme of work containing three elements. That said, I have nothing against including the negative security assurances and I shall certainly take due account of the remarks of the Ambassador of Pakistan.

I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, I do not wish to leave anybody with the wrong impression of the position of my delegation. I would be surprised - rudely surprised - if your proposals for a work programme did not include an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, something to which there is no opposition. If this is excluded, my delegation will have to review its position on the other elements of the work programme. I just want to put this on the table for the sake of transparency and I do not see any reason why negative security assurances should be left out of your proposals.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I have taken note of that statement and I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I should like to congratulate you on the assumption of your office, which, as you will by now have discovered, is not an easy one, and I wish to assure you of the full support of my delegation.

Having said this, Mr. President, we are also interested in transparency, but we do understand that you need a couple of days in order to contact delegations. With reference to the last statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, however, my understanding is that you are consulting on issues on which we do not yet have full consensus. On other issues there has been no objection, so, if you are consulting on three issues, that does not mean that the Conference cannot also deal with other issues. We are ready any time to establish an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances. I have seen particular interest manifested in that. Perhaps we also may have a future Chairman for such a Committee, but we would have to discuss that at a later stage. Clearly we have had consensus on a number of other issues, including the Special Coordinators, and that of course should remain intact. What you are doing here is not replacing previous consensus, but adding some issues in which particular interest has been demonstrated by a large majority of delegations. In that sense, we fully support your effort.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Germany for the kind words addressed to the Chair and I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, first of all, allow me to add my congratulations, too, on your assumption of the presidency at a very difficult time, as my distinguished colleague from Germany has noted.

Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

If the explanation for your dealing with the three issues is that which has been stated by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, namely, that these are outstanding issues on which further consultations are required, I am prepared to accept that. That is the basis and that is how we should proceed, but on the understanding that, when we come to adopt a work programme as a whole, there will be other issues which have constituted part of the work programme. On that basis, I can go along with the process that you have in mind.

With regard to the chairmanship of the various ad hoc committees and working groups, I am very grateful to my distinguished colleague from Germany for having nominated me to become the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee - was it the fissile material Ad Hoc Committee?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Are there other delegations wishing to speak? I see none. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 14 June 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.851
15 June 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 June 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Jean Lint (Belgium)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 851st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you know, President Hafez al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic passed away last Saturday, after having stood at the helm of his country for 30 years. The passing of this leader, who contributed so much to the stability of his country, is a great loss for the Syrian people, for the Arab world and for the region as a whole. On this sad occasion, I would like to convey, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, our sympathies and condolences to the Syrian Government and people. I now invite the Conference to observe a minute of silence in memory of the late President.

* * *

Ambassador Mounir Akram of Pakistan has asked for the floor on this occasion, to speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, the members of the Group of 21 express their heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Syrian Arab Republic on the sad demise of President Hafez al-Assad.

President Assad served his country for three decades. During that period, he worked tirelessly for the betterment of his country and its people and ably led Syria through many difficult and challenging circumstances. Under his sagacious leadership, his country emerged as an important member of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and other organizations, creating a place of importance for Syria in the comity of nations. The political acumen and statesmanship of President Hafez al-Assad were acknowledged by the entire international community. His contribution was considered essential for the realization of durable peace in the Middle East.

Mr. President, the members of the Group of 21, of which Syria is also a prominent member, share the grief and sorrow of the Syrian people and wish them fortitude and courage to bear the irreparable loss of President Hafez al-Assad.

Mr. AL-HUSSAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the creative way in which you direct the work of the Conference on Disarmament and on your extremely diligent attempts to open every possible window for us to reach an agreement on a programme of work that would allow the Conference to move towards the discharge of the highly important international mandate vested in us. I should like to express to you and to the members of the Conference our deep gratitude and appreciation for this initiative that you have taken in observing a minute of silence in memory of Syria's late-departed President Hafez al-Assad. We would like to put on record our deep gratitude to you and to Ambassador Mounir Akram, the representative of the Group of 21, for the moving words that you have addressed to us on the occasion of this grievous loss to Syria. The delegation of my country would like to thank you all for your sympathy at this sad time when Syria, the region and the world have lost a statesman of the highest calibre, who devoted

(Mr. Al-Hussami, Syrian Arab Republic)

his life to the development of a modern Syria, the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction from the region and the achievement of a peace based on justice that would respect international law and resolutions and pave the way for security, stability and prosperity in the region as a whole. Thank you Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. On my list of speakers for today I have the representative of Japan, Ambassador Noboru, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset, let me congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this truly important juncture. I am confident that your able guidance will enable the Conference to overcome recent difficulties and find its way to carrying out the task entrusted to it. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Conference. Our greetings are also extended to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his experienced deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail.

Since this is the very first time that I take the floor to deliver a statement, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express how honoured I feel to be here as the representative of Japan and to work with such distinguished delegates for such an important and fundamental cause.

Mr. President, let me start with our assessment of the outcome of the NPT Review Conference held in New York last month. It is truly remarkable that the States parties to the NPT could reach consensus on a document which covered every aspect of the implementation of the Treaty, despite the overall security environment which was not considered favourable for that Conference. This comprehensive agreement could not have been achieved without the painstaking efforts made by all the States parties to bridge the differences between their positions.

The final document adopted at the Review Conference clearly demonstrated that all the States parties to the NPT are seriously committed to the realization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The States parties also emphasized that the NPT regime should be further strengthened to achieve this goal. In addition, the process through which agreement was reached proved that differences of views and positions can be bridged by the strong political will to move forward.

Accordingly, the Japanese Government sets high store by the outcome of the Review Conference as a significant achievement, and strongly hopes that this event will be able to contribute to disarmament efforts in other bodies and forums, especially in this Conference.

Mr. President, with regard to the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to highlight, among other issues, two notable agreements on future steps for nuclear disarmament. One is the need to commence, without delay, FMCT negotiations with a view to concluding such

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

negotiations within five years. The other is the need to establish an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament.

The strong exhortation to the Conference on Disarmament to conduct these two tasks was put forward by the States parties by consensus, representing the overwhelming majority of the international community. For its part, the Conference should heed this global call and should now take a decisive step towards translating this call into reality. In order to achieve this, it is imperative for us immediately to agree on a programme of work, making best use of the momentum created at the Conference in New York.

If not, the world will never understand why the Conference on Disarmament remains complacent in its standstill. It is obvious that we cannot afford to waste any more time on procedural debates.

In this regard, my Government highly appreciates the strenuous efforts being made by you, as our President, to coordinate the views of different groups on the work programme. And I believe your efforts will bear fruit in the near future. Our basic thought on this issue is, first, that the work programme should be based on the proposals introduced in earlier sessions which already enjoy wide support, and second, that certain fine-tuning should be carried out on them in order to reflect recent developments, particularly the outcome of the NPT Review Conference.

Allow me to touch briefly upon three outstanding issues of the work programme.

The first of these is that the FMCT is one of Japan's priorities. As I stated earlier, we highly appreciate the unanimous agreement that FMCT negotiations should start immediately on the basis of the so-called Shannon mandate.

In 1998, the Ad Hoc Committee on the FMCT was established and two meetings were held under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Moher of Canada. That year, several member States of the Conference on Disarmament, including Japan, organized workshops and seminars on the margins of the Conference to stimulate and give impetus to the negotiations. Many diplomats, as well as experts from capitals, participated in serious discussions regarding key elements of the future FMCT. Through these discussions, it became apparent that the FMCT negotiations would be highly intricate, both politically and technically. For this reason too, it is essential that intensive negotiations should commence immediately, if we are to conclude our work within the target of the next five years.

Bearing in mind the time-frame which will be required for the negotiations and entry into force of the FMCT, it is of great significance that, as an interim measure, those States which produce or produced fissile material for nuclear weapons, should declare a moratorium on such production. We welcome the moratoriums already announced by certain States and call on States which have not yet done so to follow suit.

Unfortunately, the FMCT has not been negotiated since the end of the 1998 session. Japan has been striving to elaborate its national position by conducting bilateral consultations with many interested countries.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

I will confine myself here to mentioning our basic principles for the FMCT negotiations:

First, the FMCT should be globally applicable;

Second, the FMCT should be non-discriminatory;

Third, the verification measures should be cost-effective;

Fourth, the FMCT should in no way affect the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes; and

Fifth, stock should be dealt with either in parallel with the FMCT negotiations or in the subsequent negotiations.

I expect that I will soon have a more suitable opportunity in an Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate on each of these points.

The second issue that I wish to highlight is that the consensus reached in New York on the necessity to establish a subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament is a significant step forward. As we try to translate it into an actual mandate, I sincerely hope that flexibility and a spirit of cooperation will be demonstrated by the members of the Conference on Disarmament, especially by the nuclear-weapon States.

On this very important issue, let me reiterate our Government's long-standing position that advancement of nuclear disarmament requires a combination of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures which complement and strengthen one another. Furthermore, progress on and prospects for nuclear disarmament directly or indirectly affect global peace and security. This is the reason for our strong belief that the role of multilateral forums on disarmament should not be underestimated, although we highly appreciate and welcome unilateral or bilateral nuclear disarmament efforts by the nuclear-weapon States.

Judging from the discussions of the procedural aspect of this issue in recent sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, it seems to us that the work of this subsidiary body could best serve its purpose if one starts with an exchange of information and views and explores further prospects for practical steps. Seen in this perspective, we believe that the proposal by the President is well drafted and will lead us to an agreement on its basis.

The third outstanding issue on which we need to agree in the programme of work is prevention of an arms race in outer space. Japan does not recognize that there is an arms race in outer space today or that there is an imminent danger of such a situation arising. On the other hand, it is true that the existing international legal instruments were established many many years ago. When we consider the advancement of technology, we cannot deny that there may be a need to reflect on possible future measures to prevent an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

As you may recall, the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS was established and re-established every year from 1985 to 1994. Various interesting ideas and proposals were put forward in the deliberations. Yet, it must be pointed out that a convergence of views did not emerge on any of the specific proposals. Therefore, it is apparent that the time is not ripe for negotiations on this issue. It is most appropriate, as well as logical, to start with deliberations with a view to generating one or more possible future measures for our in-depth consideration. This idea is well reflected in the President's proposal on PAROS and my delegation is ready to consider the mandate on that basis.

I am a relative newcomer to this forum and may now reveal my ignorance about the relative intricate workings in the back rooms of the Council Chamber when I make so bold as to share the following impression of mine. Whenever I come to this conference room, I feel as if we are merely standing around and speaking to one another by the doorway of a conference room, instead of sitting down to discuss and negotiate substantive issues seriously. It is natural that we have differences of views and positions, and we should address and explain them through open discussions. If, however, we continue to make use of the divergence of views as an excuse for not being able to start substantive discussions, the Conference on Disarmament will remain paralysed and its credibility will be further damaged.

It is often said that the Conference on Disarmament is the best club in town and I am most happy to join it. Yet, the club was clearly not created for its members' self-indulgence. Let us get down to our real business and meet the expectations of the international community. For that purpose, let us all give our utmost support and cooperation to our President as he endeavours to find consensus for us on the programme of work.

Mr. President, you may rest assured of my delegation's full confidence and cooperation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Japan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Do any other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage? That does not seem to be the case.

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to inform you that, given the urgent need that we all feel for the Conference to start its substantive work, as we have just been reminded by our Japanese colleague, I am continuing intensive consultations in the hope of reaching consensus on the Conference's programme of work. To that end, during yesterday's presidential consultations, I requested the group coordinators to draw their respective members' attention to a proposal containing the principal elements of a programme of work. It is my hope that all delegations will study it in a spirit of compromise and that they will let me know their reactions to it through their coordinators during the presidential consultations to be held next Wednesday.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 22 June 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.852
22 June 2000

Original: ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 June 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Jean Lint (Belgium)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 852nd meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like, at the outset, to welcome in our midst the new representatives to the Conference on Disarmament, the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Juan Enrique Vega Patri, and the Ambassador of Hungary, Mr. Rudolph Joó, and to assure them of our cooperation and support.

On my list of speakers for today I have the representatives of China, Colombia and Finland. I call on the distinguished representative of China, Ambassador Hu.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the important post of President of the Conference. I am confident that your outstanding diplomatic skills and rich experience will help us revitalize the work of the Conference. The Chinese delegation assures you of its full cooperation. I also take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Sergey Martynov, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, for his constructive efforts in seeking progress in our work

I would now like to turn our attention to two issues.

The first of these is prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). At its fifty-fourth session the United Nations General Assembly adopted, yet again by an overwhelming majority, resolution 54/53 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which reiterates that the Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This has again demonstrated that most countries in the world are worried about the ominous prospect of an arms race in outer space and believe that the prevention of such a race is a real issue and a matter of urgency for the international community.

Based on superior political, economic, scientific and technical and military strength, a programme for the domination of outer space has already been formulated and set in motion, with a view to achieving unilateral military and strategic dominance. The most prominent examples of this process seen in the last two years are the development and planned deployment of the so-called national and theatre missile defence systems. Under this programme, some advanced weapon systems will be deployed in outer space or will target objects in outer space. Others, by using outer space as a platform, will provide targeting information and guidance for ground-based weapon systems. Even a layman can see that this programme will inevitably introduce the weapons or weapon systems in question into outer space, which will turn outer space into a new weapon base and a battlefield. This runs directly counter to the sincere aspirations of the international community to use outer space for peaceful purposes.

The development and deployment of the national missile defence system (NMD) will contravene the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty). Accordingly, there have been tenacious attempts to amend the Treaty, totally disregarding the grave consequences of overturning the Treaty as a cornerstone for maintaining global strategic

(Mr. Hu, China)

balance and stability. In fact, the so-called "phase one deployment" or "moderate amendments" represent the tip of an iceberg. Once the door for amendment is opened, large-scale deployment in different phases is bound to follow. The ABM Treaty will thus be increasingly weakened, leading to its final abolition. These negative developments will not only bring about the weaponization of outer space and an arms race in outer space, but will also jeopardize the global strategic balance and stability, disrupt the process of international nuclear disarmament and trigger off the proliferation of weapons on a global scale and another round of the arms race. All the achievements to date in the field of international arms control and disarmament are in danger of being forfeited.

Some people might ask: If the Conference on Disarmament conducts substantive work on PAROS, is this to be directed only against the national missile defence programmes of certain countries, or is it merely a political game played out among a few countries? The answer is no. The Chinese delegation believes that, under the agenda item on PAROS, the Conference on Disarmament should not confine itself to the issues mentioned above. On the contrary, it should cover more extensive areas, involving not only the issue of a strategic balance and the military and security situation on the ground, but also the common heritage of mankind - peace and tranquillity in outer space.

With the development of science and technology, the ability of humankind to explore and use outer space is also improving fast. Unfortunately, as shown by historical experience, advancements in science and technology are often applied to military use first and converted to help develop military capability and weapons technology. This leads to the fashioning of new military theories. More often than not, such a process results in a build-up of arms or even an arms race.

The science and technology of outer space are no exception to this rule. Some countries with advanced space technologies have already applied these technologies to the development of space weapons and the corresponding military theory has also been refashioned. Just as the development of aerospace technologies led to a build-up of arms and an arms race to achieve "domination of the air", we are now seeing, under the guidance of the military theory on the "domination of space", the emergence of a planned build-up of arms to "control space". All members of the international community should give close attention to these developments and should consider them carefully. If we seriously wish to prevent the emergence of an arms build-up, unilateral military advantage or an arms race in outer space, we must start work right now to study and to formulate the rules of the game to prevent an arms race in outer space, taking into account all relevant developments over the past decade.

In 1991, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on PAROS submitted, on his own initiative and as part of that year's annual report of the Conference on Disarmament, lists of topics corresponding to each of the three items of the Committee's programme of work. The lists recorded the work that the Committee had done on PAROS a decade ago. They may still provide some inspiration for our work today. I believe that, after 10 years, there will be some changes to the lists of issues which today's Committee needs to tackle and resolve. Indeed, to

(Mr. Hu, China)

achieve the objective of PAROS, we now face even more problems, which are both more complex and more pressing. China encourages all delegations and their outer space experts to join efforts in tackling the problems facing us.

For is it not our solemn responsibility, as entrusted to us by the international community, to conduct substantial work to address these problems in time? No longer can we afford to remain indifferent or to turn a blind eye to current developments. If we do not commence right now the negotiation of a legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space or an arms race in outer space, we will find ourselves having to negotiate disarmament or the prevention of the proliferation of weapons in outer space in the near future. For that reason, every possible measure should be taken to put a firm end to the current dangerous developments and to prevent the proliferation of weapons and an arms race in outer space.

At the current stage some international legal instruments on outer space are already in place, such as the 1963 Partial Test-Ban Treaty and the later Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and the 1972 ABM Treaty. Some people believe that we only need to strengthen these treaties. In fact, although these treaties provide us with a starting point for our future work, the many loopholes and ambiguities which they contain mean that they cannot effectively address the new problems arising from these latest developments. Consequently, they are not capable of effectively preventing the weaponization of outer space or an arms race in outer space.

The Chinese delegation believes that, in addition to consolidating and reinforcing the existing international legal instruments on outer space and enhancing their effectiveness, the international community urgently needs to negotiate and conclude new legal instruments with a view to preventing an arms race in space, including the weaponization of outer space.

In this regard, the Conference on Disarmament has both the obligation and the ability to take on this important task. As the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament should focus its work in the area of arms control and disarmament on those issues that are most pressing, most prominent and most likely to influence international peace and security. PAROS is just one such issue. Accordingly, PAROS has every reason to be one of the priorities on the Conference's agenda. After PAROS was included on its agenda in 1982, the Conference set up ad hoc committees on the issue for 10 consecutive years, from 1985 to 1994, and much useful work was done during that period. In 1999, at its fifty-fourth session, the United Nations General Assembly adopted, once again by an overwhelming majority, its resolution 54/53 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The resolution unequivocally invites the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on PAROS as early as possible during its 2000 session and reiterates that the Conference has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. No country voted against it. Accordingly, the Chinese delegation believes that there should be no obstacle preventing the Conference on Disarmament from setting up the ad hoc committee on PAROS and conducting substantive negotiations on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space.

(Mr. Hu, China)

The Chinese delegation maintains that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish, in line with the wording of the proposal contained in document CD/1576, an ad hoc committee under agenda item 3, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument banning the testing, deployment and use of any weapons, weapons systems and their components in outer space. As for the basic framework of the new international legal instrument, the Chinese delegation has already put forward some tentative ideas in its paper CD/1606, presented to the Conference earlier this year. We hope that these ideas will at least encourage a fruitful debate. Together with all other parties concerned, we are ready to begin substantive work forthwith on developing and concluding the future legal instrument.

The second issue I would like to raise is the work programme of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, to date the Conference has failed to conduct substantive work for more than three successive years. The direct reason for the stalemate is the difficulty posed by formulating a work programme. The Chinese delegation is deeply concerned by this situation. According to the Committee's rules of procedure, establishment of the programme of work is a prerequisite and the basis for the conduct of the Committee's substantive work. Accordingly, at the current stage, the Conference on Disarmament should first and foremost make every effort to formulate a programme of work acceptable to all parties.

The Chinese delegation holds that the following two factors must be taken into account in establishing the Conference's programme of work.

First, the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament should be considered as a whole and every item on its agenda should be approached in a comprehensive and balanced way. Given that different sides and parties insist on different priority items, a comprehensive and balanced approach offers the only guarantee for fair play and means of ensuring that proper account is taken of the interests and concerns of all States.

Second, the Committee's work is not conducted in a vacuum and the current international realities should not be ignored. Accordingly, the programme of work must confront, head on, the real problems of international security, particularly those developments which have major negative impacts on international peace and on arms control and disarmament.

Proceeding from these considerations, the Chinese delegation is prepared to give serious regard and active support to all proposals that meet the above requirements, including the establishment of negotiating mechanisms for the three agenda items, namely, PAROS, nuclear disarmament, and FMCT. To enable the Conference on Disarmament to start its substantive work as early as possible, the Chinese delegation is prepared, under your leadership and together with all other delegations, to map out a truly comprehensive and balanced programme of work. We also urge all other delegations to make the same effort, so that the Conference on Disarmament can soon break the deadlock and regain its prestige.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Colombia, Ambassador Reyes Rodríguez.

Mr. REYES RODRÍGUEZ (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor during this session, may I extend to you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced that your attested diplomatic skills and your broad experience will make it possible for us to reach the agreements necessary to break the stalemate in the Conference and to guide its activities towards substantive work. May I assure you, Mr. President, of my delegation's full support as you carry out your difficult undertaking.

Mr. President, at the fourteenth summit of heads of State and Government of the Rio Group, which took place in the city of Cartagena de Indias on 15 and 16 June 2000, the participants adopted the document entitled "Cartagena de Indias Declaration, Rio Group 2000: Commitment for the Millennium", which includes three paragraphs dealing with matters falling within the competence of this Conference.

The first such paragraph deals with nuclear disarmament and in it the heads of State and Government of the Rio Group affirm not only that "nuclear disarmament is the responsibility of all States, primarily those possessing nuclear weapons", but also that "it is incumbent on the international community to take specific steps to promote non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons". They also express their satisfaction with the outcome of the last Review Conference of the NPT and voice their support for the initiative on a new agenda for nuclear disarmament.

The second paragraph refers to the region's commitment to combating illicit trafficking in weapons and transnational organized crime.

The third paragraph calls on all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Ottawa Convention as soon as possible and to renew their commitment to the rehabilitation of victims and to the clearance of mines in the region. Support was also expressed for the prohibition of the use of excessively cruel or inhuman weapons.

Yesterday afternoon, Mr. President, I addressed a note to the Secretary-General requesting that the text of these paragraphs be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference, and on the very efficient way in which you have been conducting consultations and have brought us closer to an understanding with a view to starting real work. You can count on the full support of my delegation.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

During the past years, it has become almost a truism to state that the Conference on Disarmament is at a critical juncture. Still, I would persist in describing this as a critical moment. We have only a matter of days available to seal an agreement on a programme of work and to allow the Conference to move on to substantive work during the third round of this year's session. If we let this opportunity go by, we will risk having lost another year at the Conference.

The NPT Review Conference created new momentum in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The result, which was agreed to by consensus, was a victory for all States parties. The outcome is of prime importance to the NPT process. We see that it has a wider impact for pursuing further disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Needless to say, the outcome clearly shows that all problems and differences have not been settled. The process must continue through the faithful follow-up and implementation of the decisions taken.

The Conference on Disarmament should derive benefit from the successful NPT Conference. Here in the Conference, we also have to accept that it is not possible to settle all the differences all at once. Past efforts provide a good basis to assess what is achievable. We can identify fairly well those subject areas which should be included in an agreed programme of work.

I am confident that you, Mr. President, will make every effort towards a success. If we concentrate on what is possible and achievable, we can all help you in reaching agreement on a programme of work.

Your specific ideas, which in our reading we find welcome and timely, provide not only a basis for further consideration but a realistic and pragmatic solution for starting substantive work, and for starting it now. In our view, the various interests of participating States are well reflected in your approach.

For Finland, it is a key priority to get the FMCT negotiations truly under way. And as we understand the situation, all other delegations as well deem it important to start working on this question. For this purpose, the Conference has a mandate text that was agreed on by all delegations two years ago. As to nuclear disarmament, we agree with you, Mr. President, that we can take fresh guidance from the agreement reached recently in New York. Opening a dialogue on nuclear disarmament matters in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, could undoubtedly contribute to efforts that are being made in other arenas. Finland has always held the view that the START process is of particular importance. Now that the State Duma of the Russian Federation has ratified the START II Treaty, we are looking forward to the early entry into force of the Treaty and the commencement of the START III negotiations on further reductions, as was indicated by both parties earlier.

Mr. President, we concur with your view that the most reasonable way to proceed is to build on what has been agreed earlier and where common ground exists. If we look at the topics before us on which up to now there has been a large degree of convergence, I wonder what is still needed. We consider that the emerging programme of work meets quite substantive and ambitious standards.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

As we have stated in the past, however, it is obvious that the pace and intensity of the deliberations on the items in the programme of work might vary, in line with the respective mandates and the preparatory work done earlier. This should be properly reflected in allocating time to different items in the programme of work?

It is widely acknowledged here that the Conference on Disarmament should not live in isolation from the outside world. The Conference should reflect the aspirations of the different participants in an appropriate way. None of us believes that all of our wishes can be met to the fullest extent; compromises are needed. Yet the decision-making procedure - namely, by consensus - will provide sufficient assurances that the vital national concerns of all delegations will be taken into account.

To conclude, I would like to express, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your tireless efforts. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will take a constructive decision and start working on the issues which are familiar to us but which also merit careful and in-depth consideration.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Finland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. VEGA PATRI (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, in addition to congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference, I would like to thank you for the kind welcome which you accorded me and to assure all my colleagues that I shall try and establish the best relations and to cooperate with them to ensure that our joint work here is as productive as can be.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the distinguished representative of Chile and I wish him every success in his new responsibilities. His predecessor has left us with excellent memories of his time with us and I hope we will have the same relations with the new ambassador. I now call on the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Joó.

Mr. JOÓ (Hungary): Mr. President, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your kind words of welcome. At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you of the continued support of my delegation and to add that I intend personally to contribute as fully as I can to the success of this body.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of Hungary for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair and I wish him, too, success in his new duties in Geneva.

I would now like us to decide on the request addressed to the Conference by Côte d'Ivoire, that it might participate in the work of the session as an observer, even though we

(The President)

have not given the request prior consideration in an informal plenary meeting. The request is contained in document CD/WP.510, which you have before you. May I take it that the Conference agrees to this request?

It is so decided.

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to inform you that the consultation process to develop consensus on the Conference's programme of work is continuing apace, both bilaterally and within groups. During yesterday afternoon's meeting, the group coordinators encouraged me to continue my endeavours to reach an agreement at the earliest possible stage. I can assure you that I shall devote all my energies during my last few days in this post to closing those gaps between positions on those issues which are still outstanding. I hope that the high-level contacts currently under way will also help in closing those gaps and creating conditions conducive to the emergence of a consensus. With that, we have concluded our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 29 June 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.853
29 June 2000

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 June 2000, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Jean Lint (Belgium)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 853rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Wirajuda, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. WIRAJUDA (Indonesia): Mr. President, may I first of all express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that your leadership will ensure that our efforts are rewarded with a tangible and fruitful outcome, and I would like to assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation in assisting you in your task. My delegation would also like to convey its high appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Sergei Martynov of Belarus, and also to previous Presidents, for their untiring efforts and the exemplary manner in which they have presided over our deliberations during their respective tenures.

Many people say that we are now living in a world full of uncertainty. My delegation, and I for that matter, actually had no intention of taking the floor at this juncture, given the state of uncertainty in which the Conference finds itself. Nevertheless, as I am about to relinquish my post as head of the Indonesian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament, after only about one and half years in the position, I find myself compelled by the pressure of circumstances to do so, yet with the very same feeling of uncertainty. I will not deliver a long and substantive speech, since I am bound by the unwritten rule of the "one-year, one-page" farewell statement, but since this is the first and the last time that I am taking the floor in the plenary, I assume that I am entitled to depart from that rule. And for this, please bear with me if I overstep the limit.

I shall leave Geneva, and in particular the Conference on Disarmament, with somewhat mixed feelings. Since my arrival in Geneva and my joining the Conference, this body has not really been able to move forward in its substantive deliberations. Although this is not unprecedented, I still feel sorry about it. As I have remarked jokingly to some colleagues, however, I also feel relaxed as a result, because this situation has made my job easier and my life more enjoyable, not least by giving me the pleasure of seeing Geneva and its beautiful surroundings.

As was the case also in the days of my predecessor, for the last few years our delegation has been rather quiet. It is not because we do not want to take part in the deliberations and certainly not because we do not want to make a contribution. It is simply because the general atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament is not conducive to encouraging members to come up with new ideas, even though they might be formulated creatively, realistically and pragmatically. Previous presidents and coordinators have tried to promote possible solutions for breaking the continuing stalemate with their logical and rational proposals to gain consensus, so far without reaching any agreement. At a time when goodwill is still a distant wish and flexibility an empty concept, we are not sure that our contribution would make much difference at this stage. (At this moment, it seems that any proposals launched will not fly, or else will be

(Mr. Wirajuda, Indonesia)

shot down instantly, although not with missiles.) I am afraid that if the current situation in the Conference remains as it is, it will likely kill every new idea and also any creative thinking. Therefore, for my delegation, perhaps it would be appropriate to say that, at this stage, "silence is golden" or at least, "silence is better".

In retrospect, the Conference on Disarmament has not established any ad hoc committees to initiate negotiations on any specific issue since 1997. What is evident is that a lack of consensus is paralysing its work. Consequently, its credibility and even the need for its continued existence are being questioned by some observers. The Conference is certainly not on the brink of decline, however, but is rather undergoing a period of reorientation while adjusting to the often conflicting interests of its members, such as defining multilateral approaches to arms control and disarmament and, more specifically, the role of the non-nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, the Conference is both a dialogue and a negotiating forum, and this unique feature must be fully acknowledged so that its potential can be fully exploited. Such a body should take into account a redefinition of existing politico-military, as well as technological and economic, orders in such a way as to create a more equitable international system. To sum up, a radical transformation of the relationships between all actors, the nuclear haves as well as the have-nots, is essential.

Allow me now, Mr. President, to make brief reference to some of the achievements made in other international disarmament forums. I remember that, prior to the convening of the last NPT Review Conference, many, if not the majority of its parties, were pessimistic about the possible outcome of the meeting, since until the last preparatory meeting its parties had even failed to agree on the draft final text of the Conference. During the deliberations and negotiations it became quite clear, however, that all the States parties had one and the same goal, which was to achieve tangible and positive results for the Conference through a realistic and pragmatic approach. It is my hope that the Conference on Disarmament can learn a useful lesson and draw on the example of the NPT experience so that its significant outcome can be reflected in this Conference.

Although I shall be leaving this important body early next week, it nevertheless seems likely that my next assignment will continue to deal with multilateral diplomacy and, therefore, I will still be able to follow the work of this Conference closely. Indeed, there is a distinct possibility that in the future I shall have the opportunity to be back in this Conference in a different capacity, and, let us hope, also under different and more conducive circumstances, in which the Conference on Disarmament will have resolved its procedural deliberations and embarked on its mandated tasks to negotiate a general and complete disarmament.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like also to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to his able deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, as well as to the members of the secretariat for their valuable cooperation with me and my delegation during my tenure. Last but not least, permit me also to

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thank all our colleagues, and particularly those in the Group of 21, for their most helpful cooperation and support when I took up the coordinatorship of the Group in 1999. It is my hope and my conviction that the current impasse will not last long and that, soon, the Conference will be able to start its substantive work.

I would like, if I may, to conclude by quoting Oscar Arias Sanchez, who said in 1987:

> "The world today is divided between those who live in fear of being destroyed in nuclear war, and those who are dying day by day in wars fought with conventional weapons. This terror of the final war is so great that it has spread the most frightening insensibility towards the arms race and the use of non-nuclear weapons. We need most urgently - our intelligence requires us, our pity enjoins us - to struggle with equal intensity to ensure that neither Hiroshima nor Vietnam is repeated."

It is also worth remembering the earlier words of Philip Noel-Baker, who said in 1959:

> "In the age when the atom has been split, the moon encircled, diseases conquered, is disarmament so difficult a matter that it must remain a distant dream? To answer 'Yes' is to despair for the future of mankind."

I do hope that such words will inspire us as to the direction that our work should take in this Assembly, so that the Conference may soon embark without delay on its substantive work. I wish all of you the very best in applying your utmost efforts to this end.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I am certain that you will all wish to join me in extending to him, and to his family, our very best wishes in his future work. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage? As this does not appear to be the case, I would like to convey to you my conclusions regarding my mandate as President.

As you know, since taking office, I have undertaken, through consultations, to ascertain the positions of all delegations and to assess the chances of success of possible compromise solutions.

Some delegations expressed to me their firm view that the process of launching the work of the Conference on Disarmament must, if it is to succeed, include the consensus elaboration of a programme of work which takes account of the interests and the priorities of all members of the Conference. This requirement was restated during presidential consultations and plenary meetings.

In any case, everyone stressed the urgent need to find a solution to the paralysis of the Conference before the end of the second session of our work, otherwise a second consecutive year will have passed without our being able to reach agreement on a programme of work.

(The President)

In the very first week of my presidency, together with dedicated, discreet, dynamic and competent colleagues, whom I thank here, I produced a proposal which could form the basis for a compromise for the two items on the programme of work which were pending, namely, nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

I would like to read out the essential elements of this proposal in its original form, in English, which I distributed to all delegations at the end of the first week of my presidency, and this in the form of an informal Chairman's draft of the programme of work for the 2000 session of the Conference on Disarmament. These elements read as follows:

(continued in English)

"1. Prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish, under agenda item 1, an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

"2. Nuclear disarmament

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish, under agenda item 1, an Ad Hoc Committee/Ad Hoc Working Group to deal with nuclear disarmament, through an exchange of information and views on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain this objective.

"3. Prevention of an arms race in outer space

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish, under agenda item 3, an Ad Hoc Committee/Ad Hoc Working Group to examine and identify specific topics or proposals that might be a basis for subsequent in-depth consideration, which could include confidence-building or transparency measures, general principles, treaty commitments and the elaboration of a regime capable of preventing an arms race in outer space."

(continued in French)

The text of the mandate in paragraph 1, on fissile material, is not open to argument, but I have tried to develop a balanced compromise for the mandates of the subsidiary groups on nuclear disarmament and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

(The President)

For nuclear disarmament, the proposed mechanism left the choice open for either an ad hoc committee or a working group. I note that certain delegations expressed their preference for a working group. Nevertheless, I have left the choice of mechanism open, as what matters here is the level of mandate rather than the mechanism.

By comparison with earlier proposals, I used terms which seemed to me to be acceptable to the Conference, that is, that the mandate of the subsidiary group would be "to deal with nuclear disarmament".

Since some felt that the definition of the mandate was too vague, I limited it to an exchange of information and views on practical steps for progressive and systematic efforts to attain this objective.

I believe that we need only strike the right balance in establishing the link between dealing with nuclear disarmament and exchanging views and information to be able to achieve a compromise on this subject.

Nevertheless, as everything is in everything, the compromise on the issue of nuclear disarmament went via a compromise on the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space. In my proposal, the choice of mechanism between an ad hoc committee and a working group was left open. Certain delegations expressed their preference for a balance between the mechanisms for the two issues still pending.

As for the mandate, I took up the elements of a proposal which had been made last year, namely, that the mandate should be to consider and to identify specific topics and proposals which could serve as the basis for a close examination, covering, inter alia, confidence-building measures and transparency, general principles, commitments under treaties and the elaboration of a regime capable of preventing an arms race in outer space.

To me, this draft seemed to take account of the wishes of certain delegations with regard to possible negotiations on the issue, and also took into consideration the awareness that, for others, the issue was not yet ripe for the real negotiation of a legal instrument. Had a compromise been reached, which unfortunately was not the case, the programme would also have included the following items, which had been taken up by some of my predecessors:

"4. Negative security assurances

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish, under agenda item 4, an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate with a view to reaching an agreement on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

(The President)

"5. Anti-personnel landmines

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to appoint a Special Coordinator, under agenda item 6, to seek the views of its members on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to anti-personnel landmines taking account, inter alia, of developments outside the Conference.

"6. Transparency in armaments

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to appoint a Special Coordinator, under agenda item 7, to seek the views of its members on the most appropriate way to deal with the questions related to this item.

"7. Conference on Disarmament

"The Conference on Disarmament decides to appoint Special Coordinators on the review of its agenda, the expansion of its membership and its improved and effective functioning."

As an eminent colleague, who is still among us today, said in 1995: To exert pressure it may be useful to link questions which are interrelated, but if we insist on one link for too long, we will inevitably become deadlocked, because this link triggers others and, whenever an agreement is about to be reached, new elements appear in addition to those that were there before.

During the four weeks of my presidency I have tried to reconcile the different positions on the two pending items. I believe that I have taken steps in the right direction, but lack of time and political circumstances have prevented me from completing my job. It remains for me now to pass the baton on to my colleague and friend from Brazil, Ambassador Amorim, whom I wish to assure of my support.

Before closing my presidency, I would like to thank the coordinators of the groups, the Ambassador of China, the Ambassador of New Zealand, the Ambassador of Pakistan and the Ambassador of Ukraine, for their cooperation.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Petrovsky, Mr. Bensmail and Mr. Zaleski for their wise counsel, as well as to the interpreters and to the members of the secretariat for their competence and their willingness to help.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, may I first congratulate you and commend you on the way you have conducted the business of this Conference and thank you and your predecessor for all the efforts undertaken to reach agreement on the two outstanding issues before this Conference. I would also like to welcome warmly our new colleagues in this

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Conference, the distinguished Ambassadors of Chile and Hungary. I look forward to cooperating closely with them. Fresh ideas from new colleagues are most welcome in this forum. I also would like to take this opportunity to bid farewell to our Indonesian colleague. I thank him for his good cooperation and extend my best wishes to him and wish him success and good luck.

I want to thank you in particular for the proposal you have just outlined to the Conference. It constitutes a delicate balance, an honest and skilful attempt to take into account diverging interests. My delegation can fully support your proposal. It has been deeply disappointing to learn that even on this basis, you have not been able to obtain a consensus on the two outstanding issues. If these issues are still unresolved, it is certainly not due to a lack of effort or diplomatic skill. If the efforts undertaken by you and your predecessors, four experienced ambassadors, have not led the Conference out of its stalemate, then the reason for this state of affairs must lie deeper and at least partially outside this Conference.

I believe that the time has come, at the conclusion of your presidency, to examine in depth and discuss openly the present state of affairs in this Conference and, in the light of such analysis, to re-examine all options for this Conference to resume constructive work - both in the short and in the long term. One basic fact is generally recognized: there are three major topics to which delegations attach special importance. All delegations are willing to deal with these issues. Owing to differing priorities, however, no agreement has been reached on the procedural framework for dealing with two of these issues, nuclear disarmament and outer space. On the other hand, agreement does exist on how to deal with one of the major items, FMCT, as well as with a number of other items, such as security assurances, transparency, anti-personnel mines and reform issues.

At our 847th plenary meeting, on 23 March 2000, Germany proposed, on behalf of 22 delegations, that the Conference should immediately start substantive work on those items where agreement existed, while continuing intensive consultations to find early agreement on the two outstanding issues. Since the Conference resumed its work after the inter-sessional period I have not reiterated this proposal, because my delegation, like many other delegations, had high hopes that the momentum created by the successful conclusion of the NPT Review Conference would facilitate early agreement on the two outstanding issues and thus lead to a comprehensive solution ending three and a half years of stalemate and allowing the Conference to conduct substantive and continuous work over the years to come.

Six weeks after the conclusion of the NPT Review Conference we must now face up to the fact that these hopes have not been realized. The two outstanding issues remain unresolved. What is even worse, the one major item on which agreement in principle exists, FMCT, has been linked to a solution of the two outstanding issues. Through these linkages the three main items have been tied up into a package and the Conference seems incapable of any activity whatsoever as long as a solution for the whole package has not been found.

This is an untenable situation without precedent in the history of the Conference on Disarmament prior to 1999. Before that, the Conference had always been able to discuss at least

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some of the items of its agenda, to create subsidiary bodies and at the very least to nominate special coordinators. Even during its most productive period, after the end of the cold war, when the Conference was involved in the intensive negotiations of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, it still found the time to deal with other items as well and to maintain a continuous discussion of its agenda, its organization and its functioning. Even at the height of the CTBT negotiations, the Conference was able to reach agreement on an important expansion of its membership. After the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations, the Conference was at least able to nominate special coordinators in 1997 and even to establish Ad Hoc Committees in 1998, although it was not possible to commence new and substantive negotiations. Since 1999, however, the Conference has lapsed into a new and dangerous phase of total stalemate. While successive presidents have unsuccessfully concentrated their efforts on the two outstanding issues, practically all other activities have come to a halt.

I believe that it must be our top priority at this juncture to end this stagnation as soon as possible. We must not repeat the exercise of 1999 if we want to maintain the relevance of this institution as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament in the future. Since we are apparently not able to deal immediately with the most important and at the same time with the most difficult subjects, then let us at least deal, as a first step, with the less contentious issues on which general agreement already exists, such as the appointment of special coordinators. This would in no way diminish the priority attached by delegations to the three main issues. On the contrary, it could contribute to creating a new working spirit in this Conference and thereby support the continuing efforts to reach a solution to the two outstanding issues.

It has been stated repeatedly that the reasons for the present deadlock lie outside this Conference, that they are due to recent developments in the global security situation, and that these problems cannot be solved within this Conference. There is some truth in this assertion as far as the three main issues are concerned. But it is certainly not true with regard to the other items on which agreement already exists. There are no reasons outside this Conference to justify the present total inactivity. The reasons for this can only be found within the Conference itself. The complete stagnation we have witnessed since 1999 is a clear sign that this Conference is not working as it should. Neither can the reasons for this situation be found in our rules of procedure because these rules have not changed in the last few years. It should be obvious to everyone that under these circumstances there is an urgent need for an open-minded discussion on how we can improve the way the Conference is functioning in practice and how we can return to more sensible working methods.

Let me mention just one example of the current malfunctioning of the Conference. The role of special coordinators is to assist the Conference in achieving consensus on specific items. This is clearly stated in the decision contained in document CD/1036. Previous discussions have shown that this document contains many ambiguities, but on this point, at least, it is completely clear and unambiguous. The current situation in the Conference is exactly the opposite, however. The appointment of special coordinators has been made dependent on a consensus on the most difficult issues before the Conference. This is obviously an absurdity that will continue to block any activity if we do not manage to break out of this vicious circle.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

Let me now return to the three main issues before us. It is well known that my delegation attaches the highest importance to the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations. This does not mean that we attach less priority than other delegations to other items such as nuclear disarmament. On the contrary, nuclear disarmament has always been and continues to be a top priority of the German Government in the field of disarmament. But we do feel that, at this point in time, the successful negotiation of an FMCT would be the most immediate and the most practical contribution that the Conference on Disarmament can make towards nuclear disarmament. All other items under consideration in this Conference have simply not yet reached the stage where agreement exists on a precise negotiating mandate. This applies also to the subject of outer space. We fully support the establishment of a subsidiary body to discuss all aspects of this broad issue and to address the serious security concerns of certain States. Such a debate would, we hope, lead to the identification of specific areas where this Conference can undertake fruitful negotiations. To insist, however, on the adoption of a negotiating mandate even before such a discussion has taken place, would be putting the cart before the horse.

Let me make one thing clear: we do not believe that the scope of multilateral disarmament negotiations is limited only to FMCT. Even if FMCT negotiations were to start tomorrow, we would still insist on continuous efforts to identify other issues ripe for negotiation in this Conference, including new developments and new areas of concern not yet reflected in our agenda. If we are to be realistic, however, we must admit that FMCT negotiations will not start tomorrow, as long as some delegations create a linkage to the outstanding issues. We have repeatedly warned against linkages of this kind. We have pointed out, again and again, that they would lead exactly to the deadlock in which we currently find ourselves. As long as the rule of consensus governs all our procedures, however, there is not very much we can do about this situation. We are not aware that comparable linkages have been made with the other agreed items, so let us at least decide on those items as soon as possible.

The Conference has already wasted much too much of its time. It is clear that in the eight remaining weeks of this year's session we will not be able to do much substantive work before we start drafting our final report. But let us make an attempt before the end of this part of the session to break the stalemate. This would at least create more favourable conditions for a good start to next year's session, as we could easily reconfirm any decisions taken this year at the very first plenary of the next session.

Let me make it quite clear that, in our view, any such decisions should in no way detract from the efforts to reach an agreement as soon as possible on the two outstanding issues. On the contrary, I believe that these efforts should be intensified. We have full confidence in your successor, in his diplomatic skills and in his long-standing experience in Conference on Disarmament matters. But the means and the time available to a President are very limited. That is why we believe that we should consider how this Conference could best support the efforts of its President. We are willing to consider all possibilities.

Mr. President, I willingly concede that the proposal I have just put forward in my national capacity is of limited scope. It could, however, be a practical way to break our present stalemate. Obviously, I would welcome it if the Conference could act on this proposal as soon as possible.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

If any delegations have serious objections or if they have better proposals, I would very much like to hear them and to have an open discussion of all conceivable options for this Conference. We have had very little open debate in this Conference since the beginning of last year. It is high time that we should start to engage again in a genuine dialogue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? As that does not appear to be the case, may I inform you that the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 6 July 2000, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.